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PREFACE.

Repeated and urgent requests from both clergy and laity have induced the publication of this second volume of Five-Minute Sermons. They have all been preached in the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, New York, and published weekly in the *Catholic Review*. Choice has been made of such as are really little sermons, since there are many excellent manuals from which purely doctrinal instructions may be prepared. Yet they all contain, it is hoped, a solid basis of doctrine plainly put and appropriately illustrated. The main object is, however, to edify, to quicken the moral perceptions, and to move in a reasonable degree the religious emotions.

Nearly all of these sermons may serve as skeletons for discourses of greater length; a fuller treatment of the topics, by means of familiar illustrations and more copious extracts from Scripture, will fit them for use at High Mass, or on Sunday evenings.

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First Sunday of Advent.

EPISTLE. *Romans xiii.* 11–14. Brethren: Know that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep. For now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is passed, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light; let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL. *St. Luke xxi.* 25–33. At that time Jesus said to his disciples: There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars: and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves, men withering away for fear, and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. For the powers of heaven shall be moved: and then they shall see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads: because your redemption is at hand. And he spoke to them a similitude. See the fig-tree, and all the trees: when they now shoot forth their fruit, you know that summer is nigh; so you also when you shall see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is at hand. Amen I say to you, this generation shall not pass away, till all things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

SERMON I.

THE SPIRIT OF ADVENT.

It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep.—Rom. xiii. 11.

This life of ours is made up of beginnings. After the rest of the night we have on each succeeding day to begin again our round of work, and then comes the night again, when our work must be laid aside. So, too, does the life of our souls consist in great part of beginnings, though in the great work of saving our souls there should be no such thing as rest. This work must be unceasing, until that night comes wherein no man can work, the night of death, when our great Master shall demand of us an account of our labor. On this day, then, which is the beginning of the Church's year, it is well for us to pause and ask ourselves how we are fulfilling the task that is set before us. Are our souls asleep? Have our consciences been lulled into a false security concerning the state of our immortal souls? Are we careless or indifferent about the one thing needful for us — our soul's salvation?

To each and every one of us to-day come the warning words of the Apostle, "Brethren, know that it is now the hour for us to arise from sleep." Now is the time for us to shake off our slothfulness, to rouse ourselves from our dangerous state of idleness and inactivity, to cast off the works of darkness and clothe ourselves in the armor of light, to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and, arrayed in the strength which he gives, to walk honestly as in the day. "The night is passed," says St. Paul. God grant that for each one of us the dark night of mortal sin may be

for ever past and gone ; that its terrible gloom may never again settle down upon our souls, shutting out the light of heaven, the pure and radiant light of God's grace. For "the day is at hand," the day of reckoning, the day of wrath and terror, when we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. The Church to-day warns us of the approach of that time. Year by year, day by day, hour by hour it is drawing nearer. "For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

Yes, our salvation if we have been faithful, or our eternal damnation if God's judgment overtake us in the state of mortal sin. Therefore it is that the Church, upon this first Sunday of Advent, lifts up her voice to warn us of the coming of our Lord, telling us of his near approach, and bidding us to prepare to meet him. Will you heed this warning, or will you still put off the day of your conversion to God? Beware! God's warning may be given you to-day for the last time. "Behold, *now* is the acceptable time"; "it is *now* the hour to rise from sleep." There is still time for you to turn from your sins and begin again to serve God. Perhaps you have tried before and then have fallen back into old ways and habits of sin. Begin again. We must always be beginning if we would make any progress. We must examine our consciences at the end of each day, and find out how we have offended God, make earnest resolutions for the morrow, and then begin each day with the determination to avoid the faults of the day before. This is a sure means of perseverance.

And this beginning of the Christian year is a good time to take a fresh start in the affairs of our

souls. During Advent the Church brings to our minds the consideration of the four last things. Death and judgment, heaven or hell are awaiting us. Begin this day, then, as though it were to be your last day on earth, and on each succeeding day for the rest of your life keep up this practice. "For as lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness" now at the beginning of this holy season. Drunkenness, impurity, contention, and envy are, alas! far too common amongst us. "Let them be not so much as named among you, as becometh saints," mindful of your high calling in Christ. Then when the Judge appears, he will find you ready to meet him. Having begun each day with the intention of serving God, you will then be ready and fit to begin that day which shall have no end in that heavenly city which "needeth not sun nor moon to shine in it; for the glory of the Lord hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof."

SERMON II.

THE GRACES OF ADVENT.

The night is past, and the day is at hand. Let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.—EPISTLE OF THE DAY.

TO-DAY, dear brethren, we enter upon the season of preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ. For "the night is past and the day is at hand." "The day-spring, the Brightness of the everlasting Light,

the Sun of righteousness," is come "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death."

To give light to them that have been unfaithful to God's grace, to call them back—to turn them to a new life—this is the mission of our Saviour; and this is the call he makes upon us to-day—that we should return to him, "the Ruler of the house of Israel, who didst appear to Moses in the burning bush, and gave him the law in Sinai."

You, dear brethren, were taught that law when the first rays of the light of reason lit up your soul. God wrote it on your hearts; you heard it from your parents' lips; your teachers bade you love it and keep it. But have you done so? Have you not become like those whom of old God taught, and who would not listen, but went after false gods, who bowed down before idols of gold and silver, of wood and clay?

Have you not bowed down like them when you preferred money-getting to serving God; when you were willing, for the sake of gold and silver, to risk the loss of your immortal souls? Have you not bowed down when you chose to gratify your lower instincts at the cost of your spiritual ruin? Have you not bowed down to idols of clay when you have steeped yourselves in drunkenness, in impurities, in the many sins of the flesh? Oh! surely you have need of the "wisdom that cometh out of the mouth of the Most High" to teach you "the way of prudence." Oh! surely you have need of "the Orient from on high," for you "sit in darkness and in the shadow of death."

But, dear brethren, "the night is past." "Let

us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness"; "let us walk honestly." Oh! "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." "Behold Emmanuel, our King and Law-giver," he for whom the nations sighed and their salvation, has come to save us—to save men whom he has made from the dust of the earth.

Dear brethren, shall we be slow to go to him who comes with healing for our immortal souls? Tell it out among the people, and say, "Behold, God our Saviour cometh. Emmanuel is his name, and his name is great. Behold, he is my God, and I will glorify him; my father's God, and I will exalt him. The Lord our Law-giver, the Lord our King, cometh to save us."

Begin this day to prepare for the joyous feast of Christmas. Cleanse your hearts by prayer and fasting; come to the sacraments and be washed in the blood of your Redeemer; come to his table and break the bread of true friendship, that the joy of your heart may be full when we shall celebrate that day of days, when the Word which "was made flesh dwelt among us." Truly "we have seen his glory," and "of his fulness we have all received." Let us never forget his mercy; let us remember "that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep."

SERMON III.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

The angel said to him: Fear not, Zachary, for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John; and thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth.—LUKE i. 13.

THESE words, my brethren, were spoken by the

Angel Gabriel to Zachary, the father of St. John the Baptist, while he was engaged with his religious duties in the temple at Jerusalem. Before giving the account of the angel's visit St. Luke informs us that Zachary and his wife, Elizabeth, were both acceptable to God and obedient to the divine law. There are few who have received such commendation in the pages of Holy Scripture. It might have been surmised that Zachary led a good life, practising the virtues and avoiding the vices, since he belonged to the Jewish priesthood. Yet we find that his wife, Elizabeth, is mentioned as deserving equal praise with himself, for it is stated that "*they were both* just before God, walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without blame."

Such is the brief account that St. Luke has given of the parents of St. John the Baptist. Though brief, it is enough to show that any son might well feel proud of parents such as they were—blameless in the sight of God. For many years they had lived together in the hill-country of Judea, conscientiously performing their duties, and cherishing the hope that they would be rewarded for their good actions. Like the rest of the Jews who remained faithful to the laws promulgated by Moses and the prophets, which God had made for Israel, they prayed earnestly for the coming of the Messias, the Orient from on high, who was ardently expected to descend from his throne in heaven in order to enlighten those in darkness and in the shadow of death, directing their steps into the way of peace. While serving God by strict fidelity to the commandments, they did not anticipate that an angel would be sent to visit them; they did not know until advanced in age that a son would

be born to them who would be called the prophet of the Most High, the precursor of the son of David, appointed to prepare his ways.

That this blessing was unexpected is shown by the fact that Zachary hesitated to believe the message of the Angel Gabriel, and on account of this hesitation, this mistrust of the good tidings that God sent to him, he was deprived of the use of speech for several months. After the birth of St. John the Baptist his tongue was again endowed with the power to speak, and his words on that occasion, spoken under the influence of inspiration, have been preserved in the grand canticle known as the Benedictus, which is justly assigned to a prominent place in the Office of the Church.

These considerations enable us to perceive what sort of a home St. John the Baptist had while he remained with his aged parents. From the knowledge we have of them, there is no reason to think that they were deprived of anything requisite to make their home happy and comfortable. Early in life, however, St. John manifested a peculiar preference for the lonely desert. In a special manner he was sanctified before his birth, and received the gifts of the Holy Ghost in an extraordinary degree. It was not because his fellow-creatures had proved deceptive, nor because sad experience had taught him that the glittering charms of the world are transient and wither into dust, that he resolved to live like a hermit, separated from his relatives. Joyfully he abandoned his family privileges, with all that seems to make life among men pleasant, and went forth among the wild rocks in the mountain solitudes to live alone with God. Why was it that he made such

a strange choice? The answer is, that God directed him to leave houses and lands, his home and kindred, and endowed him with the heroism needed for a solitary, penitential life. In obedience to the will of God, acting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he practised unusual mortification. He selected coarse raiment, made of camel's hair; he used a strange kind of food; he abstained entirely from the use of wine. By deeds of heroic penance, by extraordinary acts of self-denial, combined with the performance of his other duties, he advanced in the way of perfection. During this season of Advent we should invoke his intercession, and strive to remove the obstacles that impede the way of the Lord and the action of His grace in our sanctification.

Second Sunday of Advent.

EPISTLE. *Romans xv.* 4–13. Brethren: What things soever were written, were written for our instruction; that through patience and the comfort of the Scriptures, we might have hope. Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of one mind one towards another, according to Jesus Christ: that with one mind, and with one mouth, you may glorify God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive one another, as Christ also hath received you unto the honor of God. For I say that Christ Jesus was minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers. But that the Gentiles are to glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: Therefore will I confess to thee, O Lord, among the Gentiles, and will sing to thy name. And again he saith: Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again: Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and magnify him, all ye people. And again Isaias saith: There shall be a root of Jesse; and he that shall rise up to rule the Gentiles, in him the Gentiles shall hope. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing: that you may abound in hope, and in the power of the Holy Ghost.

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. xi.* 2–10. At that time: When John had heard in prison the works of Christ, sending two of his disciples he said to him: Art thou he that art to come, or look we for another? And Jesus making answer said to them: Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear,

the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me. And when they went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: What went you out into the desert to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went you out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings. But what went you out to see? A prophet? yea, I tell you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: Behold, I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.

SERMON IV.

FAIR-WEATHER CHRISTIANS.

What went you out into the desert to see? A reed shaken with the wind?—GOSPEL OF THE DAY.

OUR Lord asked this question of his disciples, my brethren, regarding his precursor, St. John the Baptist, whom also they had followed in his time. "Why," said he, "did you take such trouble to see him? Why did you think so much of him? Was it because he was like a reed shaken by the wind? No, but because he was just the opposite of that. You thought highly of him, you honored him as I myself honor him, because he did not shake and tremble at the breath of popular opinion; because he was not afraid of the world, or of all the powers that are in it; because he only thought of God, and of his duty; of the work that he had been sent to do."

But would our Saviour be able to praise us so highly, my brethren, if he should come down now

in our midst? Would he not say rather that we were indeed like reeds, turning to one side or another, according to the wind that happens to be blowing? I am afraid that he would have too good reason to find fault with the words and actions of many who call themselves Christians, and who even pass for pretty good ones.

Who are these people whom he would find fault with? There are plenty of them. They are what I should call fair-weather Christians. They go to church regularly, perhaps, and to the Sacraments, it may be, quite often; when they are with pious people they can be just as pious as anybody else. They say their prayers not only in church, but at home, too; they certainly try in a way to be good; sometimes at least they would not say or do anything wrong of their own accord. And when they are alone they do very well, too; they resist many temptations, and avoid a great deal of sin. They are not what one would call hypocrites; far from it; they have a good many virtues, within as well as on the outside.

But the trouble with them is that they have little or none of what is commonly called "backbone." Alone or in good company they are all right; but take a look at them on the street, in the shop or factory, at their work or their amusements with their associates, and they do not stand the test so well. They laugh at every vulgar, filthy, and impure word that any one else pretends to think is funny and wants them to laugh at, or if they do not laugh outright they give a miserable, cowardly smile. They hear something said about the faith which they know is a vile falsehood, but they say nothing in reply;

perhaps they even allow that there is some truth in it. It takes a long while for any one to find out that they are Catholics who does not guess it by their names or know where they go to church; it takes a great deal longer to find out that they are supposed to be good ones.

Now, what is the reason of this contemptible sneaking and meanness in those who ought to be brave and generous soldiers of Christ? It is just one thing. These people do not love God enough to dare to displease any one else for his sake. Most of them have got pluck enough when something else is concerned. They would resent an insult to themselves; perhaps for years they have not been on speaking terms with many people on account of some trifling slight or injury. But when God's honor and love are concerned, the first breath of disapproval keeps them from standing up for him, as the reed bends with the gentlest breeze which strikes it.

Yes, that is the difficulty; these good people do not love God enough to stand up for him as all Christians worthy of the name should do. Let them think of this seriously. For if one does not love God enough to offend bad men for his sake, how can he love him above all things? And if one does not love God above all things, how can he be saved?

SERMON V.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

THE beautiful feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin being so near at hand, let us

consider it this morning. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, then, my dear brethren, is simply this: that our Blessed Lady, though the offspring merely of human parents, like the rest of us, and naturally liable to inherit original sin from them as we have inherited it from ours, was nevertheless by the special providence and decree of God entirely preserved from it.

She was preserved from it entirely, I say. This may be understood in two ways. First, it was never in her. It was not taken from her at the first moment of her existence, as it has been taken from us at baptism; no, it was not taken from her, for it was not in her even at that first moment.

Secondly, she was entirely saved from its effects, not partly, as we have been. None of its consequences remained in her, as I have said they do in us. No, she was as if there had never been such a thing; except that her Son willed that she should suffer together with him, on account of its being in us.

Now, my brethren, I hope you all understand this; for a great deal of nonsense is talked about this matter, especially by Protestants, most of whom have not the least idea what is meant by the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Mother, and who yet object to it just as bitterly as if they did. They either confound it with her virginal motherhood, in which they themselves believe and yet seem to object to our believing it, or they accuse us of saying that she was divine like her Son, our Lord. If they would only examine they would find that what the Church teaches is simply this: that our Lady is a creature of God like ourselves, having no existence at all before the time of her Immaculate Conception; but that she

is a pure and perfect creature, the most pure and perfect that God has ever made; immaculate, that is to say, spotless; free from any stain or imperfection, especially from the fatal stain of original sin. And that the reason why God made her so was that she was to be His own mother, than which no higher dignity can be conceived. If they object to this, let them do so; but let them at least know and say what they are objecting to.

Let us hope that some Protestants, at least, will not object to this doctrine when they understand it. But perhaps some of them may say: "This is all very good, but what right has the pope, or any one else at this late day, to make it a part of the Christian faith?" And it may be that even some Catholics will find the same difficulty.

I will answer this question now, though it is a little off of our present subject, on account of the prominence which has been given to it of late. The answer is simply this: The pope has not added anything at all to the Christian faith in defining the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. He has no more done so than the Council of Nicæa did in defining the doctrine of the Divinity of our Lord.

You remember, my brethren, perhaps, that from this council the Nicene Creed, which is said or sung at Mass, takes its name. It was called together to condemn the errors of some who maintained that our Lord was not truly God. And it solemnly defined that he was. Very well; was that adding anything to the Christian faith? Of course not; it was simply declaring what the Christian faith was, to put an end to the doubts which were arising about it. That is plain enough, is it not?

Now what was it that the pope did in defining the Immaculate Conception? Exactly the same thing. He defined what the faith really was to put an end to doubts about it. The only difference was that those who opposed or doubted the Immaculate Conception of our Lady were not so much to blame as those who opposed or doubted the Divinity of our Lord, or even in many cases not at all to blame. It was not such a prominent part of the faith, and had been more obscured by time. But the action of the pope and the council in the two cases was just the same.

SERMON VI.

THE TOTAL ABSTINENCE PLEDGE.

The angel said to him: Fear not, Zachary, for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John; and thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great before the Lord; and shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb; and he shall convert many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.—LUKE i. 13–16.

My brethren, the message brought from heaven by an angel deserves careful examination, because the angel acts as a messenger from God. A little reflection will convince us that the message delivered to Zachary by the Angel Gabriel contained a very peculiar prediction concerning the total abstinence from wine and strong drink, which St. John the Baptist practised throughout his life. In other matters no special directions were given regulating his acts of

self-denial. No mention is made of his raiment in the angel's message; neither was any information communicated in regard to his choice of food. Hence there is a special significance in the declaration which the Angel Gabriel put forth when he predicted that St. John the Baptist would abstain from the use of wine and strong drink. This passage of Holy Scripture, therefore, furnishes a strong proof in favor of total abstinence. In the Book of Leviticus, x. 9, and in the Book of Numbers, vi. 2, as well as in the writings of the prophet Jeremias, xxxv. 61–9, there are texts to be found which show that total abstinence was recognized long before the birth of St. John the Baptist. But on account of his intimate relations with the Holy Family, and on account of the extraordinary approval bestowed upon him by our Lord, by which he was canonized, so to speak, before his death, St. John the Baptist is the most prominent of all the total abstainers mentioned in the Bible.

Considered as an antidote, an effectual safeguard against the degrading vice of intemperance, the practice of total abstinence is now defended not only by examples from Holy Writ, but also on arguments based on common sense and experience. It is regarded as the heroic form of the virtue of temperance, which may be meritoriously practised by those who have never been addicted to drunkenness. The determination to renounce even the lawful use of strong drink is especially commendable as a means of self-preservation for young men. More than any other class of society, they are assailed by temptations to excessive drinking; and by unwise and unscrupulous friends they are often taught to regard drunkenness

as a pardonable weakness. Undoubtedly, then, it is a wise act for a young man at the present time to erect a strong barrier, a wall of defence, to protect himself from a most dangerous and destructive vice.

For occasional and habitual drunkards, however, who wish to reform and live in state of friendship with God, total abstinence is not a mere act of heroism, but something indispensably necessary. The pledge for them is simply a firm purpose of amendment, a manifestation of their desire to avoid that which they know has been for them a proximate occasion of sin. In many cases total abstinence, though it may be a stern remedy, is the only sure preventive of intemperance, and is imperatively demanded for the spiritual and temporal welfare of numerous families. The man who has offended God and debased himself by drunkenness cannot obtain an unconditional pardon. To obtain forgiveness from God he must have a sorrow for past offences, a determination to do better in the future, and a willingness to atone for his sins. What he must do in the future to secure his safety can be ascertained by examining his past experience. By the application of these principles, especially in the tribunal of penance, the growth of virtue is fostered and the progress of vice is retarded. In this way the Church proclaims to each individual the great lessons which St. John taught by the banks of the Jordan. To all of her children she repeats during this season of Advent the admonition uttered long ago by the voice crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord: make straight his paths.

Third Sunday of Advent.

EPISTLE. *Phil. iv.* 4–7. Rejoice in the Lord always: again, I say, rejoice. Let your modesty be known to all men: The Lord is nigh. Be not solicitous about anything: but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God. And the peace of God which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

GOSPEL. *St. John i.* 19–28. At that time: The Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and levites to John, to ask him: Who art thou? And he confessed, and did not deny: and he confessed: I am not the Christ. And they asked him: What then? Art thou Elias? And he said: I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered: No. They said therefore unto him: Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us? what sayest thou of thyself? He said: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaias. And they that were sent, were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said to him: Why then dost thou baptize, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet? John answered them, saying: I baptize with water; but there hath stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not. The same is he that shall come after me, who is preferred before me: the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose. These things were done in Bethania beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

SERMON VII.

BAD COMPANY.

In one of his epistles (2 Timothy iii. 1–5) St. Paul speaks of *dangerous times* for Christians, when "men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, haughty, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked, without affection, without peace, slanderers, incontinent, unmerciful, without kindness, traitors, stubborn, puffed up, and lovers of pleasure more than of God; having an appearance, indeed, of piety, but denying the power thereof."

At the present time there is in the world, especially in populous cities, no small number of men who have the combination of vices so forcibly described by the Apostle St. Paul. In some places they may be in the majority, and have the power to enforce their depraved views on their righteous neighbors. By their slanders they can revile virtue; by their blasphemies they endeavor to bring odium on God's plan of ruling the world. Their hatred of religion is manifested not only in the regulation of personal affairs, but also in their business methods, and in their utterances on public questions. If these stubborn, puffed-up lovers of sensuality, traitors to God, who are without affection and without peace, could be assigned to a reservation in some corner of the world, their range of influence would be kept within a definite area. But they are like their master the devil, roaming from place to place, everywhere seeking the destruction of men's souls.

Hence it is an important matter, and especially for

Catholic young men, to consider the injurious results of the unavoidable contact with those in the world who are more or less infected with erroneous views, or have become the victims of debasing vices. Such characters are to be found in nearly every department of business. It often happens that a young man, when he begins to work, is obliged to enter a sphere beyond the control of his parents, where he will be in close proximity to blatant infidels, who claim an intellectual superiority on account of their unbelief. Business engagements may compel a Catholic young man to be within hearing of shallow sceptics, who take every opportunity to ask questions—not to get information, but merely to ventilate their contempt for all religious teaching. These hostile influences have produced in many of our young men very deplorable results. By a sort of indifference, resembling the dry rot, they have allowed themselves to get into a very unsafe state of mind regarding their duties to God.

Enlightened self-interest should prompt every young man to keep a sharp lookout for all that is injurious to him. He may have the best religious training, together with the virtuous surroundings of a good home, but these will not be sufficient without his own personal activity. If he selects by preference heretics and freethinkers as the companions of his leisure hours; if he is so puffed up with the idea of his own ability that he can find no Catholic associates worthy of his notice; if he is so confident of his own strength that he habitually neglects to receive Holy Communion, he has become a traitor to the King of Heaven. Our Lord wants his followers to attain the highest standard of human excellence. To

those who love him and fearlessly keep his commandments he gives the courage which belongs to true manliness; and their piety has power to surmount every obstacle on the way to heaven.

SERMON VIII.

THE VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS.

Make straight the way of the Lord.—John i. 23.

This expression, dear brethren, is no new one in Holy Scripture, and it fell on no unaccustomed ears. More than seven hundred years before Jesus Christ the great prophet Isaias spoke about "the voice of one crying in the desert: Make straight in the wilderness the paths of our God." Again, three hundred years later, another prophet, Malachias, wrote: "Behold, I send my angel, and he shall prepare the way before my face." Again, about six months before Jesus Christ was born, an aged priest, Zacharias, took his own little child, who was only eight days old, in his arms, and in the beautiful hymn of the *Benedictus* says of him: "Thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way."

You know, dear brethren, who this little child was, who was the burden of all this prophetic song. You know it was St. John the Baptist. And you know, too, the mighty work he had to do.

And now, in this morning's Gospel, it is St. John the Baptist himself speaking: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord."

Now, how is this "way of the Lord" to be "made straight" in the spiritual desert of our hearts? Well, the prophet Isaias tells us that there are five things which we have to do in this matter: The first, "every valley shall be exalted"; the second, "every mountain and hill made low"; the third, "the crooked become straight"; the fourth, "the rough ways plain"; and the fifth, "the glory of the Lord revealed."

He begins, you see, by telling us that the *valleys* must be exalted. And don't you think that these "valleys" are a very good likeness of all the things which we have left *undone* in our lives? All these abysses of idleness, of neglect, of carelessness, of indifference, which lie in the wilderness of our sinful past, these have to be filled up. Christ our Lord cannot come to us so long as there are such great holes in the road. We must set to work and "exalt" them by throwing into our religious life all the pains and care and diligence and faithfulness we can.

Then there are the "mountains and hills," which must be made low. For oftentimes, when the Evil One sees that a man cannot be altogether discouraged from serving God, then he turns round and persuades him that he *is* serving God very well indeed; that he may be proud to think how often he has resisted temptation, how often overcome difficulties, how often done great things for Christ's sake.

So arise the vast mountains of pride and self-will and self-conceit. But be sure our Lord will not climb over these to come to you. You must first get them out of the way. They must be made low, if you would enter into life: for it is written, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

Then the "crooked places"—I suppose you know what they are—all crooked ways of lying and deceit and untruthfulness. We call a truthful person *straightforward*, because he does not turn about to this side or to that in what he says, but goes straight to the truth. Well, whatever is not straightforward is crooked, and the crooked path is one which Christ will not walk in. So we must try every day to go on more and more straightforwardly with what God would have us do, according to the saying in the Proverbs, "Let thine eyes look straight on, . . . decline not to the right hand, nor to the left, and the Lord will bring forward thy ways in peace."

Once more: there are the "rough places." Rough tempers, rough words, and rough manners; such feelings as spite, and anger, and ill nature, and revenge; as cutting and cruel words, and quarrelling and fighting. Such rough places must be made very plain and smooth if the road is to be fitted for the feet of our meek and gentle Lord.

And, lastly: "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed." So shall it indeed be to those that are found worthy to enter into the kingdom of heaven. But what that glory is who shall tell? St. John could not. "Beloved," he says, "we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be." St. Paul could not, for when he was caught up into heaven he tells us that he heard words "which it is not granted to man to utter." Isaias could not. "From the beginning of the world," he says, "they have not heard; the eye hath not seen, O God! besides thee, what things thou hast prepared for them that wait for thee." All we know is, that this glory shall be very great. And if we serve God faithfully

here we shall one day see it, and shall one day know. We shall awake after his likeness and be satisfied therewith.

SERMON IX.

PENANCE.

For now the axe is laid to the root of the tree.—MATT. iii. 10.

ST. JOHN BAPTIST, my brethren, as you know, retired to the desert at an early age, and led there an austere and solitary life, eating coarse and unpalatable food, abstaining from wine and strong drink, cutting off all unnecessary enjoyments of the senses, and giving himself up to prayer and meditation. What was his special motive in this extraordinary course of penance? It was that he might worthily prepare himself for the office which had been assigned to him—that of disposing men's hearts to recognize and receive our Lord when he should come as their Redeemer. It was by penance alone that those hearts could be so disposed, and he was to be specially the apostle of penance; hence he had to give a signal example of it in his own person; for preaching, however eloquent, is of comparatively little effect unless the preacher practises the virtues to which he exhorts others; and the power of his preaching will be in proportion to the illustration which it finds in his own life.

Therefore, though it was not necessary for St. John, sanctified as he was even before his birth, to cut off all other sources of pleasure in order to fill his soul with the joy that comes from the love of God, and

though he had no sins to atone for, for his life had been free from blame, still he took up this course of penance in order to show forth even more plainly than by his words the need that his hearers would have, in their measure, to do likewise, if they were to share in the redemption to come.

For now, as he told them, the axe was to be laid to the root of the tree God's chosen people, the Jews, whom he had specially watched over for so many years, whom he had often chastised and corrected, and had brought back to his favor when they profited by his visitations, they were no more to be thus dealt with. The tree which had sprung from the seed of Abraham was not to be allowed any longer to stand with merely some lopping and pruning; no, now, if it still would not bring forth the good fruit of a thorough and genuine penance, it was to be cut down and cast into the fire. It was the supreme test which was approaching; if the people whom he had chosen would stand it, they should still retain their place; otherwise they should be rejected as a nation, and only those among them who would truly turn to their God should be saved.

My brethren, St. John is still preaching this doctrine of penance to us. The Church of the New Law is not on her trial, as was that of the Old; no, her Divine Founder has promised that she shall endure to the end of the world. But we, each one of us, have to take the words of his precursor to ourselves. We are called by the name of Christ; yes, but that will not save us. St. John said to the Jews: "Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham for our father." So we are not to think ourselves as belonging to Christ, unless we have cast

out from our hearts and souls what puts a fatal obstacle to his entrance into them. His axe will be laid to our root also, unless we on our part lay the axe to the root of our sins.

What is this root of sin in us? It is just this desire of sensual indulgence against which St. John in his life as well as in his doctrine came to make the strongest of protests. If we wish not to bring forth the fruits of sin, we must lay the axe to its root. We must practise penance and mortification, not indeed always to the degree in which he practised it, but at least so far as it is necessary that we may keep the law of God. We must not dally with those things which are dangerous to us, innocent though they may be to others. Our Lord has told us that if even our eyes and hands themselves are an occasion of sin we must pluck them out or cut them off; if, then, there be anything we enjoy, but can really do without, we must not make a pretext of the good use which we might make of it if it really is plain that we will abuse it, but must resolutely cast it away. If we would avoid the bitter fruit which will naturally grow we must lay the axe to the root of the tree.

Fourth Sunday of Advent.

EPISTLE. 1 *Cor. iv.* 1–5. Brethren: Let a man so look upon us as the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God. Here now it is required among the dispensers, that a man be found faithful. But as to me it is a thing of the least account to be judged by you or by human judgment: but neither do I judge my own self. For I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet in this am I not justified: but he that judgeth me, is the Lord. Therefore judge not before the time; until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise from God.

GOSPEL. *St. Luke iii.* 1–6. Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip his brother tetrarch of Iturea and the country of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilina, under the high-priests Annas and Caiphas: the word of the Lord came to John, the son of Zachary, in the desert. And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins: as it is written in the book of the words of Isaias the prophet: A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled: and every mountain and hill shall be brought low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

SERMON X.

FRUITS OF PENANCE.

Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of penance.—MATT. iii. 8.

ST. JOHN BAPTIST in these words, my dear brethren, teaches us, as he taught those who came to him, that penance, if it be true and genuine, must bring forth its proper fruit. Every repentance, if it be sincere, every confession, if it be really good, must be followed by a good life. If any confession is not so followed, it must needs be a delusion; though it should have been accompanied by torrents of tears, and the sins exposed as perfectly as God himself knows them.

And, moreover, the tree which brings forth the good fruit should continue to bear it; it should not only for a few days or weeks give this proof that it is what it should be, and then have him who planted it come to seek fruit on it and find none.

Yet how often do we find sinners who come to confession with what would seem to be the best dispositions very soon back just where they were before! How discouraging it is to the priest to find the fruits of a mission which seemed to be so promising reduced down almost to nothing for so many who seemed to profit by it; to spend long hours, to wear away his strength, instructing, exhorting, and absolving, and to have so little return from his labor for God and for souls!

What is the reason of all this failure of what began so well? Of course it is partly that the tree planted by the grace of God in the Sacrament of Penance was not tended afterwards. Its life was not supplied to

it, as it should have been, by the frequent renewal of confession and reception of Holy Communion. But there was a difficulty further back than that; a want of something at the start, which, indeed, was the reason that the sacraments were not regularly received. What was this difficulty? It was a want of a thorough earnestness; of an understanding of the greatness of the work that was undertaken, and of a real determination to sacrifice everything in order to accomplish it.

It is a great undertaking which one commits one's self to in coming to reconcile himself with God after a sinful life. The task is not merely to examine his conscience, to tell his sins plainly and without concealment, and to feel heartily sorry for them; that is a great part of it, but by no means all. There is a great deal left, and that is to leave them for good; to quit company with them for ever. And this is not such an easy matter. When one has lived so that his whole pleasure has been in sin, in drunkenness and debauchery, in filthy conversation, in bad actions and bad thoughts, it will perhaps seem almost like giving up life itself to part with them. The penitent sinner has not all at once become an angel; his whole nature has been warped and twisted out of place by sin, and, though the guilt of the sin has gone, the effects are there; his soul, like a limb out of joint, has much to suffer before it can get set right again.

A man must make up his mind, when he comes to serve God after serving the devil, that he has got an uphill road to travel; if he does not, he will not persevere. Labor and suffering, self-denial and mortification, he has to face these manfully. His consolation, his happiness, as well as his strength, have got

to come from God. If one understands this he will seek that happiness and that strength again where he first found it—in confession and Communion. But if he does not, if he thinks that all will go right now without any more trouble, his old nature and habits will claim their dues, and he will soon be back in his sins again.

Yes, we must cut right down to the root of sin if we wish to bring forth the fruits of penance, and must make up our minds to suffer the pain that this cutting will bring. Occasions of sin must be avoided, appetites must be denied, contempt and ridicule must be faced; we must pray, we must struggle, we must resist even to blood; we must put our former life to death, that Christ may live in us. For, as St. Paul tells us: "If we be dead with him, we shall live also with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him." There is no other way.

Let us not shrink from this pain and this conflict; that would be the greatest mistake of all. But let us understand it, that when the trial comes, as it surely will, it may not find us unprepared.

SERMON XI.

PREPARATION FOR CHRISTMAS.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord.

We are such unprofitable servants that we have much to do to prepare the way of the Lord in our hearts. If we have done all that is required of us

we are, nevertheless, unprofitable servants, and unless we believe this we are spiritually blind.

The better the opinion which we have of ourselves the worse is our spiritual condition. The good opinion, than which nothing can be more false, which we have of ourselves prepares the way for a fall into sin.

The way of the Lord, the way of salvation, is found by humility, which always leads to penance.

The holy Council of Trent says that "the whole Christian life ought to be a perpetual penance." How few realize this, because they think they are what they really are not! Now, if penance be the life of the Christian in the state of grace, it must be a crying necessity for one who is in the state of sin. What food is to the starving man penance is to the soul in this unhappy state.

Penance is the preparation required of us for the coming feast of Christmas. This is the lesson of Advent. For four weeks the purple vestments, the prayers and ceremonies of the church, and the fasts on Fridays have been appealing to our eyes and ears, if not to our hearts, to prepare in this way. The wise man views the obligation which he is under to do penance as very urgent. He banishes timidity and cowardice and puts his hand to the plough with courage and confidence.

The foolish man hates to hear of penance, because his passions have got the mastery. When asked to keep the commandments and fulfil the duties of his state, he says: "I cannot." To bridle his passions and give up bad habits seem to him too hard a task.

Now, if you should consult any man who has done penance faithfully, so as to persevere in God's grace

for years, he would say the foolish man's view of penance is a false one. God is more merciful and lenient than we imagine. It is the devil who dresses up penance as something repulsive.

In urging upon you to prepare for Christmas by penance my first words are: "Take courage." "Taste and see how sweet the Lord is."

St. Leo says "the cause of the reparation which we make for our sins is the mercy of God." It is our way of loving him who first loved us. How well the prophet Isaias describes this penance when he says: "The Lord says, I will lead the blind in the way in which they have not known; in the ways which they have not known I will make them walk. I will change their darkness into light, their crooked ways into ways that are straight. I will accomplish these words in them and will not abandon them. I am found," says God, "by those not seeking me, and I have appeared openly to those who have not asked for me."

We see by these words how much the grace of God assists us, and how God mercifully forgets our past sins when we do penance sincerely.

But our penance must be sincere. We must "bring forth fruit worthy of penance," says St. John the Baptist, the precursor of our Lord.

It matters not if we are "the offspring of vipers," as the holy Baptist called the multitude who approached him for penance, provided "we lay the axe to the root of the tree."

Now, the words of the prophet, instead of repelling sinners, attracted them. The publicans who were farthest from God came and asked: "Master, what shall we do?" And they received the gentle

answer, "Do nothing more than that which is appointed you."

And the profligate Roman soldiers asked him, saying: "What shall we do?" And he said to them: "Do violence to no man; neither calumniate any man, and be content with your pay."

We see from these answers how penance and salvation are within the reach of all. With the people—*i.e.*, those who were of the House of Israel—St. John was more strict, saying: "He that hath two coats let him give to him that hath none, and he that hath meat let him do in like manner."

Now, to every one of us penance consists in banishing from our hearts every grievous sin. This can be done by a good confession and faithful performance of what is enjoined by the confessor.

After such a preparation we cannot fail to make a worthy Christmas Communion.

SERMON XII.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

Thou shalt call his name Jesus. For he shall save his people from their sins.

THERE is no day, my dear brethren, in the whole year which is so joyfully looked forward to as that which is now almost dawning on us. Old and young, rich and poor, good and bad, all have some happy memories of Christmas, some bright hopes attached to it, and a warm place in the heart for it. To many, it is true, this joy is only worldly; it is

that, perhaps, of having a good dinner, of receiving nice presents, of meeting pleasant friends. Still, even these joys are not displeasing to our Lord; he is not angry if we are happy now, even if it is not altogether for his sake. The only pleasures which he would deny us are those which come from the breaking of his laws; specially from drunkenness and impurity, which are too apt to prevail in these holiday times.

Still, though he does not grudge us innocent pleasures, he would fain have us think more of the real joy, far above all others, which this beautiful day ought to bring us. This real and lasting joy is that on this day he, the Saviour of the world, first appeared in it; that he came on this day to free us from sin, to open the way for us to that pure happiness which alone can for ever satisfy our souls. And not only to enable us to have a claim by a late repentance to that happiness when we die, but to give us a foretaste of it now; not only to free us from sin in the next world, but to do it now and here.

What is the reason, then, my brethren, that we do not make this the first joy of our hearts on Christmas day, as our Lord wishes that we should, instead of thinking so much of those others, which should be only reminders of it? There is only one reason possible, and that is, that we do not feel the weight and burden and misery of sin as it really is; that we wish indeed to escape from its punishment, but not from itself; it is because we do not really hate our sins as they should be hated that it does not fill us with joy to remember that the divine Child was this day born to save us from them.

Yes, this is the reason why we do not feel the joy,

which should be our chief one at Christmas, now that the days of innocent childhood are past. We do not hate sin from our hearts; we even cling to it; at best we make compromises with it. Mortal sin, perhaps, we try to avoid, but venial faults do not trouble us; this is the best that can be said for most of what may be called good Christians. And how many there are who come outwardly to worship before the manger of Bethlehem, but with hearts entirely turned from their God, who lies there in cold and poverty for their sakes, pleading with them for his sake to give up their sinful habits! How many go on offending him at this holy time, without repentance, almost without remorse!

Hatred of sin; yes, that is what we want if we would be happy at Christmas. And now is the time to learn to hate it. For surely the love of God comes easier to us now, if we will only try to obtain it, than at any other time, unless, perhaps, on Good Friday, when we see the sacrifice now begun accomplished. And the love of God is the hatred of sin, which is the only thing which he hates, the one cause of all his pain.

Do not let this Christmas go by, then, my dear brethren, without the joy which should come with it. Do not let this opportunity pass of acquiring that love of our dear Lord which will make you really hate and trample under foot all that offends him, and which will make you rejoice beyond measure that he has put it in your power to do so. Pray, now, at least that you may learn to love him; that you may enter into the joy of knowing not merely that he can save you, but that he has saved you from your sins.

Sunday within the Octave of Christmas.

EPISTLE. *Gal. iv.* 1–7. Brethren: As long as the heir is a child, he differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all: but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the father: even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law: that he might redeem those who were under the law; that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father. Therefore now he is no more a servant, but a son. And if a son, an heir also through God.

GOSPEL. *St. Luke ii.* 33–40. At that time: Joseph, and Mary the mother of Jesus, were wondering at these things, which were spoken concerning him. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother: Behold this child is set for the ruin, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed. And there was a prophetess, called Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser; she was far advanced in years, and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity. And she was a widow until fourscore and four years; who departed not from the temple, by fastings and prayers serving night and day. Now she at the same hour coming in, gave praise to the Lord; and spoke of

him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel. And after they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. And the child grew, and waxed strong, full of wisdom : and the grace of God was in him.

SERMON XIII

CHRISTMAS JOY.

Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy.—LUKE ii. 10.

THERE is hardly any one, my brethren, who lives where this feast of Christmas is kept who does not feel a special joy in it. Why do we say that "Christmas comes but once a year," if not because we feel that there is nothing else that can take its place? We look forward to it months beforehand ; when it comes, we keep it as long as we can and let it go with regret. Why is it that it has such a warm place in our hearts?

Is it merely that it is by common consent a great holiday ; that it is a breathing-place in the bustle and hurry of life, a time for meeting our friends, for giving and receiving tokens of affection and regard, a time of feasting and making merry? This has something to do with it, but it is not all. For if this were all it would be possible to make by law a holiday like this, which no one has ever succeeded in doing. The early settlers of this country, in a mistaken zeal against church festivals, endeavored to make a substitute for Christmas ; but the failure of their attempt has driven their descendants back to the ob-

servance of this feast, though not to the church which gives it to them.

Yes, we all feel that the joy of Christmas is a thing not made to order. It comes from a source which lies in the very mystery which we commemorate; and, even though we do not meditate or reflect on it, the stream from this source diffuses itself through our life and sweetens all the other joys which come at this time. And they come because of it; we make merry outwardly because we are, and have cause to be, glad at heart.

And what is this cause and source of joy? Is it because Christ our Lord has come to save us from sin and eternal ruin? No, it is not simply that; for we celebrate our salvation, our redemption, our ransom from the power of death and hell more specially at Easter than now. That is the festival of our Lord's triumph and our deliverance; it should and does open heaven to our souls, and give them a promise and almost a foretaste of it. But still it does not come home to our hearts as this beautiful time of Christmas does.

And no wonder; for at Easter we cannot but feel that our Lord, though triumphant and glorious, and promising us a share in his triumph and glory, still is separated from us. He has passed the portals of death, he has risen from the grave, he has put on immortality. We cannot follow him where he has gone till we have freed ourselves from all the stains of earth, till we have been purified and washed by penance in his Precious Blood. He has passed from mortal to immortal life, and it is the raising of the mortal to the immortal, of earth to heaven, that Easter celebrates. And this, though indeed it is the

object of all our hope, is so high that we, sinners that we are, cannot fully make it our present joy.

But Christmas is heaven come down to earth. It is the God of heaven condescending to us; taking our weakness upon him, sympathizing with us, and asking us for sympathy and love. He hides his majesty and glory; he veils the splendor of his face; he puts aside all that could distinguish him from ourselves. He invites us to come to him without fear; he asks only that, sinful though we be, we should try to love him as he loves us. Christmas is the sight of the Creator begging for the love of his creatures, and humbling himself that he may obtain it; that is the reason why it goes to the heart of all who have any heart to give.

Let us then, in this happy season, enter into this joy which is the cause of all the rest which we have, which is so easy for us, which has come to our doors, and only asks that it should be let in. But let the love which goes with it be not a mere passing feeling, to bear no fruit in our lives. Let it bring us indeed to him who has come down to us; let our joy be crowned and perfected by a real return of our hearts to him who has done so much to win them; let us receive him in deed and in truth in his holy sacraments, and never let him go again.

SERMON XIV.

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

Be sober.—2 Tim. iv. 5.

Brethren, those two little words of St. Paul in the epistle of to-day contain excellent advice, especially

to-day, on the eve of the new year. How much woe it would hinder, how many families it would save from ruin, how many souls from hell, could they be made a common watchword in any large city in this country during the year 1883!

But do you wish me to tell you the easiest way to be sober? It is to take the total abstinence pledge. What does a man do when he takes the pledge? Just what the farmer does who, seeing that his fence is about high enough to keep the cattle out of the grain, makes it just one rail higher; for he knows that there may be one beast wilder than the rest who will leap over an ordinary fence. So a prudent man, seeing the ravages of the vice of intemperance among his friends, dreads some taint of it hidden in his own nature; dreads some moment of weakness during the passing of the convivial glass, or during some depression of spirits or foolish mirth. So he puts all danger out of the question by the pledge. For if there be danger from an inherited appetite or from a convivial disposition, or from prosperity or adversity, there is no mistake about this: the man who does not drink a single drop cannot drink too much.

But again: what does a man do who takes the pledge? Just what the kind mother does who wants to induce her sick child to take the bitter medicine—she tastes it herself. The pledge is taken by a man who may not need it for his own sake, but who loves another who does need it. It is taken in order to give good example. It is not only a preventive for one's self, but for those who may be led by our influence. It is one great means that fathers and mothers use in order to save their children from the demon of drunkenness. Oh! how pleasing to God are those

parents who practise total abstinence by way of good example! Oh! how blessed is the home from which intoxicating drink has been utterly banished! How wise are those parents who thus teach their children that intoxicating drink, though it may be used with innocence, must always be used with caution! Children reared in such a home know well enough how to avoid treating, frequenting saloons, and convivial habits of every sort. Such parents not only obey the Apostle's injunction, "Be sober," but do the very best possible thing to induce those whom they love to obey it also.

But once more: what does a man do who takes the pledge? He offers something to God in atonement for the sin of drunkenness. And herein is the best use of the pledge. It combines all the other good purposes of it. It puts the top rail of double safety on the fence that keeps the beast out of the garden of the soul; it sets up the strong inducement of good example; but more than all it consecrates everything to God by uniting it to our Lord's thirst on the cross.

Brethren, why was it that, when our Lord suffered agony of soul, he complained in such words as would be apt to move the drunkard more than any other sinner: "O my Father! if it be possible, let this *cup* pass from me." "O my Father! if this *cup* may not pass away from me except I *drink* it, thy will be done." Is there no special significance in his choice of those words? And listen to the account St. John gives of our Lord's physical agony: "Jesus, knowing that all things were accomplished that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, saith, *I thirst!* . . . And they filled a sponge with vinegar and put it to

his mouth. When Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar he said: It is finished! And he bowed his head and gave up the ghost." Thirst was the only bodily torment he complained of. Had he no special purpose in this?

So the man who takes the pledge suffers thirst in union with Christ and for the love of God to atone for sins of drunkenness.

That is why it does not settle the matter against taking the pledge when one can say he does not need it. Our Lord had no need to suffer thirst. He could say, I own all the cool fountains in the world, and all the strengthening wine of the world is mine, and I might drink and never need to thirst for my own sake; but I love the poor drunkard, and for his sake I will die thirsting for a cool drink and tasting only bitter vinegar. And the Catholic total abstainer says: "O Lord! permit me to bear thee company in thy bitter thirst."

SERMON XV.

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS.

And Herod sending killed all the men-children that were in Bethlehem and in all the confines thereof from two years old and younger.

Who is not shocked by the recital of Herod's cruelty? Carried away by pride and ambition, and the fear of losing what he had usurped, this tyrant tried to put to death the King of Kings by the murder of the holy innocents. Who in our day are like Herod? Those who murder innocent children.

Fiendish mothers, desiring, perhaps, to cover their shame or to escape the labor of bearing and bringing up children, take the lives of their unborn infants. Those, too, who knowingly sell or give or advise the use of drugs calculated to destroy the life of the unborn—all such commit Herod's crime. Yet how often this crime is nowadays committed!

Woe to these wretches! Woe to the Herod-like physicians who, for any reason whatsoever, directly prescribe or use means to prevent child-birth! Herod met his punishment in a bad death, and his soul went into a hell of eternal torments. What must the murderers of little children expect?

But I have another cruelty to cry out against. It is that of those who destroy the "little ones of Christ" by neglecting to instruct their little children in the way of salvation. The law of God requires that children as soon as they have the use of reason, which is about the age of seven years, should know the elements of the Christian doctrine, should know the necessity of avoiding sin, and should be taught the practice of virtue; also, that children, as soon as they are able to sufficiently profit by receiving Holy Communion, should do so. No child should ever be allowed to go beyond the age of twelve years without having made First Communion. Many can receive First Communion at nine or ten years of age, and perhaps younger. Confirmation should be received as soon as First Communion. Parents are guilty before God if they do not require their children to keep the commandments of God and his church from their earliest years until they leave the parents' charge. How many parents do their little ones a deadly injury by not sending them regularly to Sunday-school! What

is it to bring up children to burn in the flames of hell for ever, as some Christian parents do? It is simply soul-murder. It deserves no better name. Have you been guilty of soul-murder? If so, hasten to repair the evil as much as you can. You can never do it wholly, but you must do what you can. There is yet another cruelty towards "the little ones" of Christ. It is to scandalize them by your bad example. Instead of learning by your example to adore our Blessed Lord, to love and reverence his Blessed Mother and the saints, they, perhaps, learn to take God's holy name in vain. Your falsehoods teach them to lie; your dishonesty teaches them to steal. Your anger and quarrelling teach them to be stubborn and disobedient. Ah! Christian parents, be careful how you hang this millstone of scandalizing the little ones of Christ about your necks.

Finally, you destroy your children by not correcting their faults. You wink at the evil which they do. You fail to punish them, regardless of God's honor and their good. If you do punish them, it is not "correction in the Lord," but you do it to gratify your satanic rage. Some fathers and mothers are not worthy of the name. The dignity and responsibility of fathers and mothers are very great. See that you are faithful to the obligations which belong to your high and holy state.

The Epiphany.

EPISTLE. *Isaias lx.* 1–6. Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thy eyes round about, and see: all these are gathered together, they are come to thee: thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall rise up at thy side. Then shalt thou see and abound, and thy heart shall wonder and be enlarged; when the multitude of the sea shall be converted to thee, the strength of the Gentiles shall come to thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Madian and Epha: all they from Saba shall come, bringing gold and frankincense: and showing forth praise to the Lord.

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. ii.* 1–12. When Jesus, therefore, was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of King Herod, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying: Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and we are come to adore him. And Herod the King hearing this was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him: and assembling together all the chief priests and Scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ should be born. But they said to him, In Bethlehem of Juda; for so it is written by the prophet: "And thou Bethlehem, the land of

Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come forth the ruler who shall rule my people Israel." Then Herod, privately calling the wise men, inquired diligently of them the time of the star's appearing to them; and sending them into Bethlehem, said: Go and search diligently after the child, and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore him. And when they had heard the king, they went their way; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was. And seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And going into the house, they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down, they adored him; and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their own country.

SERMON XVI.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT.

For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God they are the Sons of God.—Rom. viii. 14.

The end of our pilgrimage, like that of the three wise men, my brethren, is union with our Lord. Of course union with God, through his power and his being present everywhere, always exists, whether we are his friends or not. But the state of grace is the union of love. By that union God rules our souls. By that union the Holy Spirit of God, the third person of the most Holy Trinity, really dwells within us. In the state of grace we are brought into loving contact with the living Spirit. Now the Apostle, in

the words of our text, wishes to teach us one effect of that wonderful union. "For the Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God." That is to say, when the Holy Spirit enters into your heart he announces his coming, he assures you of his friendship, he excites within you a sentiment of filial affection for your Heavenly Father. How could it be otherwise? Could God be long in our hearts and we be altogether ignorant of it? Of course he does not take away the natural fickleness of our minds; the star sometimes shines faintly, or even for a while disappears from view. God does not reveal himself as he is; he does not interfere at all with his external work in the holy church; he does not substitute his interior action on the soul for that exterior action of visible authority and sacramental symbols. It is, indeed, by means of this external order that the Holy Spirit enters into our hearts; it is, besides, only by means of the church's divine marks, her divine testimony, her divine influence in the sacraments, that we can be quite sure that Almighty God has come down into our souls. Yet the Holy Spirit really has a secret career within us. "Deep calleth unto deep"; that is, the infinite love of God calls into life our little love. He has his inner church in our souls, so to speak; or rather he brings into his spiritual and hidden temple all that is outside, spiritualizes the external order, joins the purely mental with the sacramental, and, having set our faces in the right direction and started our feet moving in the right road, he sets us to thinking right, he stirs up noble aspirations, he purifies our feelings, and finally gives us testimony that it is really himself, the Spirit of God, who has thus been at work

making our inner life such as befits the sons of God.

Now, my brethren, as I said before, this testimony of God within us is not like the splendors of Paradise bursting upon the soul; nor is it so very plain as to be able to stand alone without the external criterion of his church as a testimony of God's friendship, except now and then in the case of some great saint. Yet there are many things in our inner life that, if we study them over a little, show that God has been acting upon us. What else is that wonder of the world called the faith of Catholics? Who else but the Spirit of God could give such power to believe very mysterious truths, such a stability to wavering minds, such a humility of belief to proud minds? And what except divine love could be as sweet as the taste the soul enjoys in the reception of the sacraments? Call to mind the utter transformation of soul that so often takes place at First Communion; remember the flood of divine influence at your Christian marriage; remember how after that death-bed scene your broken heart was cured of its despair when you turned to God; remember how at missions or during seasons of penance, or at one or other festival, it seemed to you that heaven was beginning before its time. All this is God's work on your life. The tender emotion at hearing the divine promises, the loving regret for sin, the joy of forgiveness, the imagination filled —plainly by no human means—with images of celestial peace, the understanding as clear of doubts as heaven of clouds, the will strong and easily able to keep good resolutions, sometimes the very body sharing the lightness and vigor of the soul what is all

this but the embrace of the Holy Spirit? And if one says *he* does not feel it, and yet hopes he is in the state of grace, I answer that he will not be long deprived of it. Or it may be he is tepid; his soul is not able to feel any more than a hand benumbed with cold; his ear not hearing because his attention is too much fixed on the voices of the world to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. His eye is too much dazzled by the false glitter of the world to catch sight of the star that leads to our Lord's feet.

SERMON XVII.

FOLLOWING GOD'S GUIDANCE.

Be ye, therefore, followers of God, as most dear children. —EPH. v. 1.

My dear brethren, these are not words of counsel or good advice; they are words of command, written by St. Paul. This command is to follow God, and to follow him as most dear children, obediently as the Magi did of old. What is it to follow God? It is to do at least as much as we do when we follow any one great man. How do we act then? We seek to be with him a great deal. We listen to his every word. We do as he does. We adopt his views of things. We repeat what he teaches. Neither do we dare to differ from him, for fear that people will say that we have no sense; nor do we venture to act in any manner opposed to his ways of doing. In a few words, a man who is followed is the leader in fashion, in taste, and style. Everybody approves his ways, and imitates them. His friends have also the

friendship of the world, simply because they are his friends. Any one whom he approves and recommends is listened to and followed because he has recommended him. If we want to follow God, he does not really require, outwardly, any more than men require of us to follow them.

But how can we do this?

First: Seek to be with God a great deal. Where is he, that we may find him? God is everywhere, and is always found by looking for him and seeking for him diligently in prayer; for prayer keeps us near to God and God near to us. And he is always on the altar: hear Mass not only on Sundays but now and then on week days; visit the Blessed Sacrament.

Secondly: Listen to his every word. God speaks to our souls in prayer, not with a voice like the voice of a man, but in his own sweet and quiet way. We must listen attentively to hear the gentle words of God, not with our outward ears of the body, but with the ability to hear that is within our souls; the ability of the soul to hear the voice of a spirit speaking to our spirit. God also speaks to us through his Holy Word in the Sacred Scriptures, in the Epistle and Gospel set apart for each Sunday of the year, in the writings of holy men and women, in the teachings of Christian parents and friends. But the most important way in which God has taught, and continues to teach us all, is by means of his church. When we listen to her words, in sermons and other instructions, we hear the Word of God.

Thirdly: Do as God does. Try to be like him, and him alone. Take care to do always the thing that is right. Try hard to be loving, merciful, for-

giving, and gentle to all, even your enemies. When we have anything to do, we must say, Would God do this way or that way? When we meet with cruel treatment from others, with ingratitude and base injustice from those we love, we must say at once, How does God treat those who do these things? How does he treat me, notwithstanding my many, many sins? I shall go and do to these bad people as he has done to me. I shall even bless them, as he has blessed me.

Lastly: If we want to follow God, at least as well as we follow a great man whom we have made a leader among us, we are sure to honor his friends, and obey those he sends to us in his name. Who are these? Not only all good people, but especially our pastors and spiritual directors. The pastor or parish priest is a man sent by God to make sure of the success of God's work in his parish. Any one who follows God in that parish unites heart and soul with his priest to help him carry out his plans. If any one wants to get the greatest amount of merit for his good deeds, he is sure to get it by following first these plans. For the priest stands as a father among his children. He knows the good and the bad, the rich and the poor. He knows what is best for each. He is the best adviser as to what ought to be done, and as to the way it is to be done. In charities he is certainly the best leader. Private works and charities are good, it is true; but the first duty, after one's own necessities are cared for, is to follow the order of God, in aiding the parish work through the parish priest and his assistants. We may safely say that one act done for God, in union with those put over us by him, is worth in heaven, and here also, many

good works done simply because we like to do them our own way.

To follow God, then, is to follow as dear children. We must consent to be led by God in all things connected with duty, just as little children are led by their fathers and mothers. We must take care, at least, that we follow his lead, and not show more honor to others than we do to him.

First Sunday after Epiphany.

Epistle. *Rom. xii.* 1–5. Brethren: I beseech you, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be reformed in the newness of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace that is given me, to all that are among you, not to be more wise than it behooveth to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety, and according as God hath divided to every one the measure of faith. For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office: so we being many are one body in Christ, and each one members one of another in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Gospel. *St. Luke ii.* 42–52. When Jesus was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast, and after they had fulfilled the days, when they returned, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not. And thinking that he was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance. And not finding him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his wisdom and his answers. And seeing him, they wondered. And

his mother said to him : Son, why hast thou done so to us? behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said to them : How is it that you sought me? did you not know that I must be about the things that are my Father's? And they understood not the word that he spoke unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth : and was subject to them. And his mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men.

SERMON XVIII.

THE CHRISTIAN HOME.

He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. . . . And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men.—GOSPEL OF THE DAY.

IN these few words, my brethren, the sacred writer raises the veil that conceals the mysteries of our Lord's hidden life, and gives us an insight into the domestic concerns of the Holy Family at Nazareth. Jesus lived with Mary and Joseph. He was obedient and subject to them, and so he advanced in age and wisdom and grace with God and men. The door of the holy house is opened to us, but only for a moment, so that we might get a glimpse of the domestic life of a model family. Joseph, the father, day by day works at his trade to support the family. He rises in the morning ; gives his soul to God in prayer. He toils through the day. He comes home at night to enjoy his rest in the company of Jesus and Mary. He meets with trials, but he is patient ; he is tempted, but he sins not ; he leads a busy life, but he still finds time to pray. Mary, the mother, tends the household

duties with care and precision, and by her sweet, kind ways diffuses an air of peace and contentment throughout the home. Jesus, the child, is affectionate and submissive to his parents in everything. Here is the model of a true Christian home. Its groundwork is the love of God ; it is surrounded by an atmosphere of virtue, and to its members it is the holiest and dearest spot on earth. Such should our homes be.

The true Christian home is to society what the sanctuary is to the church of God. The parents are the priests in this sanctuary. It was God who ordained them priests when they stood before the altar with clasped hands and promised that they would be faithful to each other while life lasts. The Blessed Sacrament of this sanctuary is the Sacrament of Matrimony. It is the great treasure-house of supernatural strength to the married couple.

The perpetual presence of our Lord in this sanctuary is by his grace, which is never wanting.

The altar in this sanctuary is the hearthstone around which the family gathers. The communion-rail in this sanctuary is the family table, from which are dispensed the necessities of life.

There is about the sanctuary in the church of God an atmosphere of piety and reverence. It has a sanctity that no stranger dare violate ; it has a privacy which no one but he who has a right dare invade. Such an atmosphere should be about the sanctuary of home. A priest would never allow a heretic or an infidel to sit in the sanctuary of God. He would never allow a corrupt man to stand on the altar of God. Take care, then, Christian parents, how you violate the sanctity of your homes. Take

care what heretical or infidel books you allow to pass the gate of that sanctuary. Take care what bad newspapers you allow within its sacred precincts. Take care of the persons whom you allow to stand around your family altar. It is one thing, you know, to be obliged to meet a man in every-day life; it is a far different thing to invite him to your home, and permit him to violate its sanctity.

It is the duty of a priest on the altar of God, by his good example, to edify his flock; to stand at all times before his people a bright, shining light of Christian virtues. So, too, it is your duty, priests at the family altar, to be a model of all virtues to your children, so that they might learn from you what it is to be a Christian. Would it not be horrible for a man to come in on the altar and utter repeated curses? Would it not be fearful to see him stagger up to the altar of God in the state of intoxication? It happened once while Mass was going on, during the Elevation, while all heads were bowed in humble adoration, a drunken man rushed into the church, and in a loud voice uttered a horrible oath. It made the hearts of the good Catholic people stand still, and their blood ran cold in their veins. Is it any the less horrible for a father to come home intoxicated to the household sanctuary, or a mother, when anything goes wrong in the house, to give vent to her wrath in harsh language and sometimes even cursing?

See to it, then, dear parents; make your homes holy places—real sanctuaries, where you can do your duty as priests of our All-Holy God. Keep from them all evil influences, so that they might be places where even the Child Jesus would not be ashamed to dwell.

SERMON XIX.

JESUS TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE.

And not finding him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking him.

THE Gospel of to-day tells us, my brethren, how our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph lost Jesus on their way home from Jerusalem, where they had gone with him to keep the feast of the pasch, and how in great distress they returned to the city in search of him. What fears and anxieties must have filled their minds as they thought of the many enemies which he had among the rulers of the people, jealous of his promised kingdom, and of the harm which they would try to do him if they recognized him for the child whom Herod had sought to destroy! And how perplexed Mary and Joseph must have been that he who had hitherto saved himself by their protection should at this tender age abandon them and remove himself from their care! Had they not shown enough love and care for him? Had they proved themselves unworthy of him? Surely it could not be his purpose when so young to begin his great work. Would he not at least have told them if such had been his plan?

No, our Lord did not propose to begin his mission then; for, though he was indeed God, he was also then a child, and that mission was not a child's work. But he did wish to show them that his great work even then filled his heart and soul; that the fire of love for us, which brought him to the cross, was consuming him even in childhood. "Did you not know," he said to them when they found him, "that

I must be about my Father's business?" "How is it that you sought me?" "You might have known," he seems to say, "that, if I were not with you, I must be in the temple speaking to my people of their God."

He also wished to give them an opportunity of merit by showing the love of God which filled their souls, too. For their grief was not the common grief of parents who have lost a child, great as that trouble is. It was the loss of the Divine Presence which affected them beyond measure. God had been with them for all those years as never with any one else, and now he had left them, they could not tell why or for how long. They would not have spared him for an hour, even to their kinsfolk and friends, with whom they thought he was, except for charity; and now he had left them, perhaps for the rest of their lives, which were worth nothing without him.

Would that we loved God, my brethren, as they loved him; that he were the light and consolation of our lives, as he was of theirs! Let us think of this as we reflect on their pain and anguish in that weary search for the visible presence of him whose grace was, after all, always in their souls. How is it with us? Would we care for this presence which they so bitterly missed? Would it not, perhaps, even be a painful restraint? Do we care, as it is, to be near Jesus? Is his presence in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar a consolation to us? We revere that real Presence of our Lord, but do we love it? If so, why do we not seek it more?

Do we even care for his presence by grace in our souls, which they always had in its fulness, and never dimmed by the shadow of sin? To lose that,

had it been possible, would have been a thousand deaths to them; what is it to us? How easily do we lose that grace; how little do we care to regain it!

Oh! let us at least imitate our Blessed Mother and her Holy Spouse as far as this. If we do not love to be with Jesus as they did, let us at least seek to have him with us by his grace. If we have lost him, let us seek him, and not be weary till we find him; let us not rest till he comes again to our souls, never to leave them again.

SERMON XX.

HOW OUR SAVIOUR TAKES AWAY SIN.

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sins of the world.—St. John i. 29.

After our Blessed Lord was baptized by St. John the Baptist, beloved brethren, he retired into the desert, where he remained forty days in prayer and fasting. At the end of this time he directed his steps towards the river Jordan, where John was baptizing. Here a large concourse of the Jewish people had assembled to listen to the preaching of the forerunner of Christ. In the midst of these St. John, inspired by the spirit of God, and professing his deep and ardent faith, testified of our Lord that he is the Lamb of God, and that it is he who taketh away the sins of the world.

What a glorious testimony this, and how cheerfully received by the fervent Christian! Have you ever pondered over these beautiful words, and made them

the subject of your meditation ? Have you ever tried to find out their true meaning, and thus make them profitable to your souls ? Yes, truly, Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God. He is the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world. For you and for me he voluntarily left the bosom of his Father, and lowered and even debased himself by assuming a nature like our own. For us he endured the sufferings and privations of his childhood ; for us he sent up many heartfelt prayers to God the Father before the beginning of his public life ; for us he labored and preached ; for us he suffered the ingratitude of his disciples, the ignominies of the Jews, the insults of the soldiers, the hardships of the journey to Calvary, and, finally, ended his torments on the cross, with the cry "*Consummatum est*—It is finished." This, and much more, did our Blessed Lord gladly undergo for us all. And how have you, dear brethren, requited such infinite love ? Fathers, are you solicitous for the little household which Almighty God himself has so fondly entrusted to your care ? Then are you imitators of the patience and endurance of your Saviour during his bitter passion. Mothers, do you strive to make yourselves patterns of the Christian virtues of gentleness and forbearance ? Then do you imitate the example of your Lord in bearing the defects of others and treating them with kindness and compassion. Oh ! how watchful would we not be, dear brethren, could we but understand the infinite love our Lord Jesus Christ manifested for us during his life on earth ! But St. John not only gave testimony to our Lord being the Lamb of God, but he further testified that it is he who takes away the sins of the world. He

did not come simply to announce to the world the divine mission which he received from the Father; he also came to heal the infirmities of our souls by imparting to them the abundance of his grace. This office he performed himself during his mortal life on earth. He it was that purified the soul of Mary Magdalene and enriched it with sanctifying grace. It was he who gave the living water of eternal life to the sinful Samaritan woman. And what our Lord did for these and many others, beloved brethren, he is now effecting in the midst of us. It is not necessary to remind you of how our Lord chose a small band of apostles, and made them the beginning of his church; how he bestowed upon them and their successors the unheard-of and marvellous power of forgiving sins. Yes, brethren, the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church are the visible representatives of Jesus Christ; they are the comfort of the afflicted, the strength of the weak; they have an efficacious remedy for those who are living in the state of mortal sin; by pronouncing the words of absolution they restore to the penitent and contrite sinner his lost inheritance of sonship, and make him an heir of the kingdom of heaven. Oh! how thankful we should be for the mercy and goodness of our God! What a tender love we ought to cherish for the Church, the Bride without spot! What respect is not due to those who hold the place of Christ in our behalf! How sufficiently prize the inestimable blessing of the tribunal of penance! Let us remember and meditate upon those three precious graces, beloved brethren, that they may be the source of sweet joy to us now, and the earnest of a happy eternity hereafter.

Second Sunday after Epiphany.

FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS.

Epistle. *Rom. xii.* 6–16. Having gifts different, according to the grace that is given us, whether prophecy, according to the proportion of faith, or ministry in ministering; or he that teacheth, in teaching; he that exhorteth, in exhorting; he that giveth with simplicity; he that ruleth with solicitude; he that showeth mercy with cheerfulness. Love without dissimulation. Hating that which is evil, adhering to that which is good; loving one another with brotherly love; in honor preventing one another; in solicitude not slothful; in spirit fervent; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; instant in prayer; communicating to the necessities of the saints; pursuing hospitality. Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep; being of one mind one to another; not high-minded, but condescending to the humble.

Epistle of the Feast. *Acts iv.* 8–12. Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said to them: Ye rulers of the people and ancients, hear: If we this day are examined concerning the good deed done to the infirm man, by what means he hath been made whole; be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was rejected by you, builders; which is become the head of the corner; nor is there salvation in any

other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved.

Gospel. *St. John ii.* 1–11. At that time: There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples, to the marriage. And the wine failing, the mother of Jesus saith to him: They have no wine. And Jesus saith to her: Woman, what is that to me and to thee? my hour is not yet come. His mother said to the waiters: Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye. Now, there were set there six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece. Jesus saith to them: Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them: Draw out now and carry to the chief steward of the feast. And they carried it. And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, and knew not whence it was, but the waiters knew who had drawn the water, the chief steward calleth the bridegroom, and saith to him: Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and he manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

Gospel of the Feast. *St. Luke ii.* 21. At that time: After eight days were accomplished that the child should be circumcised, his name was called Jesus, which was called by the Angel, before he was conceived in the womb.

SERMON XXI.

PROFANITY.

To-day, my dear brethren, as you know, the church celebrates the festival of the Holy Name of

Jesus ; of that name which is above all other names, at which every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess the glory of him to whom this great name belongs.

Yes, the holy church does indeed reverence this holy name, and we, her children, do not fail to honor it. Following a pious custom, we bow the head when it is mentioned, and it is to be hoped that we also make at the same time with our hearts an act of homage to him who bears it, and thank him for all that he has done for us.

And yet, strange to say, some of these very Christians who pay to the name of their God and Saviour, at least outwardly, this tribute of honor on certain accustomed occasions seem to take at other times a pleasure in trampling it, if I may so speak, in the very dirt under their feet. To see them in church, you would think that they would hardly dare even to take at all upon their own lips this holy name which they hear from those of the priest ; but outside, on the street, and even, it may be, in their own homes, they show a horrible familiarity with it. This name above all names is coupled with every foolish, passionate, and even filthy word which the devil can put into their hearts and on their tongues.

Do I say this is strange ? Ah ! that is far too weak a word. To one who will stop and consider, even for a moment, it seems incredible, impossible that a Christian, one who believes himself to have been created by the great God whose name he bears, and to have been redeemed by him from the power of the devil, at the cost of his own Precious Blood ; who has knelt in prayer before him ; who has received from him the pardon of his sins ; who has received

him in his real and true Presence on his tongue in the sacrament which he has instituted with such infinite condescension and love—I say it seems impossible, intolerable, inconceivable, that this wretched worm of the earth, on whom so many and such surpassing favors have been showered by the Divine Goodness, should, with this very tongue on which his God has rested, outrage and insult the name of this God, and that the name which above all others tells how good and merciful he has been. It seems as if even the infinite patience and love which our Lord has for us could not brook this indignity, this spittle cast in his face, not as at the time of his Passion, by one who did not know who he was, but by those who from childhood have known full well all the truths of their holy faith, and who well understand that it is the Divine Majesty which they despise.

Indeed, my brethren, believe me, even the infidel shudders when he hears in passing along the street the holy name of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, of him whom even he respects above all other men that have ever lived on earth, thus outraged, profaned, and defiled by those who profess to believe him to be far more than the best and greatest of men; who invoke him as the One who sitteth on the Eternal Throne, before whom the angels veil their faces, to whom is due benediction and honor and glory and power for ever and ever. Even the infidel, I say, shudders; and he wonders how it can be, if what Christians believe is true, that the God whom they thus insult suffers them to live.

But you may say it is a habit you have got; that is the excuse which seems good to you, and which you seem to think that God ought to accept. Sup-

pose you had a habit of spitting on your neighbor's face or clothes by preference to any other place, how long would he endure it? It is a habit, yes; but it is one which you can amend and get rid of altogether, and which you are most urgently and seriously bound to get rid of, if you would not have to answer for it at the bar of him whom this insufferable habit outrages and defies. Take care, take care, take care, I warn and beseech you, for God's sake, for the sake of those who hear you, and for your own sake, that this habit come to an end. Watch, keep guard against it; punish yourself should you even inadvertently fall into it, that your offended God may not have to take the punishment into his own hands.

SERMON XXII.

THE SIN OF CURSING.

Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not.—Rom. xii. 14.

These words are found in the epistle appointed for the second Sunday after Epiphany, and were read by the church long before the institution of the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, which is now always celebrated on this day, yet they contain a lesson most appropriate to this feast. For there is no way in which God's most holy name, which to-day is especially set before us for our veneration, is more frequently or more grossly dishonored than by cursing. To curse is to call down God's judgment or vengeance upon our fellow-men, and its worst form is when the

holy and awful name of God or our Lord is made use of. Unhappily the fault has become so common, even among those who think themselves good Catholics, that its grievous nature is seldom realized or, perhaps, even thought of.

The habit is often acquired in childhood, frequently from the example of parents, themselves given to cursing. Like all early-acquired habits, it grows stronger and more deeply-rooted with advancing years, until at last the habit is made the excuse for the sin. It is a vain excuse. You are guilty before God of mortal sin if you have formed this habit, and you are guilty of remaining in the state of mortal sin if you make no effort to break yourself of it. It will do you no good to go to confession and accuse yourself of cursing, unless you are contrite and follow the advice which your confessor gives you, and really make an earnest resolution and a serious effort to overcome this scandalous habit.

You should begin by making each morning a resolution to avoid cursing throughout the day, begging God's assistance for your efforts. If, during the day, you fall inadvertently into the old fault, you should impose some little penance upon yourself, such as the recitation of the "Hail Mary," or the pious ejaculation of the holy name of Jesus, with a prayer for God's forgiveness. And then at night you should examine your conscience as to how often you may have fallen into the habit during the day, and resolve to make the next day a better one in this respect. If you faithfully persevere in this practice you will soon be the master of your tongue, and able to restrain it from cursing by a little watchfulness; but if you do not adopt some such practice as this, and really set

to work in earnest to overcome this habit, you are guilty before God of mortal sin, and your contrition at your confessions is not good for much.

I have spoken of this habit as scandalous, as this is one of its worst features. Besides the insult that is offered to God and his holy name, an incalculable amount of harm is done to our neighbor. Children, especially, learn to curse from their elders, and the extent of this fault among young children is frightful to contemplate. Those, too, who are not of our faith, when they hear Catholics cursing and swearing, are apt to set it down to some defect in our religion, and thus the true faith is brought into contempt.

But the habitual curser seldom thinks of these consequences of his sin. He rarely even attends to the meaning of the words he uses. If he could only be brought to stop and think of all that is implied in the expressions we so often hear upon our streets, he would shudder at the thought of using them. To ask Almighty God to send a soul to hell for all eternity, to utter that holy name whereby we are saved in a prayer for the eternal damnation of a soul redeemed by the Precious Blood of Christ, is an impiety so dreadful that we could scarcely believe it possible did not our ears tell us the contrary.

Yet there are those who not only say these things, but mean them, at least at the moment when they are uttered. How carefully, then, should we guard ourselves against those outbursts of anger in which we are led to make such a fearful abuse of the gift of speech, the noblest of God's natural gifts to man! Above all, we should try to realize the spirit of the Gospel as expressed in the words of St. Paul, "Bless

them that persecute you," remembering that no affront that can be offered to us can even justify the spirit of revenge that is implied in a curse. "Bless," therefore, "and curse not," that so you may yourselves receive the blessing of the Lord.

SERMON XXIII.

REVERENCE FOR THE NAME OF GOD.

THE Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, brethren, affords an opportunity for meditating upon reverence for the honor of God, especially in the person of our Blessed Saviour. Reverence for God is something different from the love of God and the fear of God. Have you not noticed that when a bad boy neither fears his father nor (as far as we can see) loves him, that he yet often keeps up at least a show of respect for him? I don't care much for him, he says, but after all he is my father; I must respect him. So with sinners. Many a sinner will break every commandment of God and the church except one or two, which he fancies he must observe in order to keep up appearances; that is to say, show at least some outward respect. The most atrocious scoundrel will not eat meat on Friday, because that would be a sign of losing all respect for religion. A wretch abandoned to every vice will say a Hail Mary or make the sign of the cross sometimes in order to persuade at least himself that he has not lost all respect for religion. He will not despise the piety of his friends, but rather respect it. Respect for holy things and holy

practices is the last remnant of religion in the sinner's soul.

Well, brethren, let us ask if Almighty God has not set up any particular sign of reverence that we are to pay him? What is that, among all religious practices, which he would have us do as a token of inner and outer reverence? Of course you know what I mean; you know that it is reverence for his holy name.

The name of God, and especially the name of Jesus, are set up as the divine standard before which every man will prove his reverence for God. Cursers and swearers and blasphemers forget this. No sin is so common as profanity in its various forms. Yet it shows a heart not only void of the fear of God, and of the love of God, but also, and worst of all, void of even reverence for God. A man who habitually curses is penetrated with defiance of the Divine Majesty. Holy Scripture says that he has put on cursing like a garment; that it has entered in unto his bones. In the old law a blasphemer was stoned to death. And in our own times God often anticipates the wrath to come by sending sudden death upon profane men. I lately read in the papers that a man, standing at a saloon-counter, cursed his own soul, and instantly sank down upon the floor stone dead. Many of you have doubtless heard or even seen such visitations of divine justice.

And it is in view of the sacred obligation of reverence to God in his chosen symbol—which is his name and his Son's name—that, although he had but ten commandments to give us, one of them was set apart to secure respectful speech when dealing with God: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord

thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Brethren, you and I in future will be particularly careful to honor the sacred name of Jesus. Are you tempted? That name is a resistless charm against assaults of flesh, world, or devil. Are you tired out? The name of Jesus is a restful and soothing influence. Are you sick? That holy name will strengthen you with supernatural vigor. I hope that when you come to die your last breath may utter that name of Jesus with deep confidence, and that our Lord will answer your dying sigh with an affectionate welcome into his heavenly court.

Third Sunday after Epiphany.

EPISTLE. *Rom. xii.* 16–21. Brethren: Be not wise in your own conceits. Render to no man evil for evil. Provide things good not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as is in you, have peace with all men. Revenge not yourselves, my dearly beloved; but give place to wrath, for it is written: "Revenge is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." But if thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he thirst, give him drink; for doing this thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good.

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. viii.* 1–13. At that time: When Jesus was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him; and behold a leper coming, adored him, saying: Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, stretching forth his hand, touched him, saying: I will; be thou made clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him: See thou tell no man; but go show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony to them. And when he had entered into Capharnaum, there came to him a centurion, beseeching him and saying: Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented. And Jesus said to him: I will come and heal him. And the centurion, making answer, said: Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my

servant shall be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh, and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. And Jesus, hearing this, wondered, and said to those that followed him: Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel. And I say unto you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said to the centurion: Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee. And the servant was healed at the same hour.

SERMON XXIV.

PRACTICAL FAITH.

Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom shall be cast into the exterior darkness.—GOSPEL OF THE DAY.

THESE words, my dear brethren, were spoken by our Blessed Lord to the Jews on the occasion of the cure of the servant of the centurion. This centurion was an officer, like what we would call a captain, in the Roman army; he was not a Jew, so he did not belong to God's chosen people, his church of the old law. No, he was a heathen by birth; he had been brought up in error, in ignorance of the true religion; he had not the prophecies which the Jews had to tell him clearly that a Saviour was to come into the world. He was indeed in darkness compared with

this favored Hebrew people among whom his lot was cast; but he saw our Lord, and that was enough for him. He saw the power of God, and he believed. He knew that this Messias, whom the Pharisees were rejecting, was the Master of life and death. "Lord," said he, "I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed." Immortal words these, which the Catholic Church has treasured up, and puts on thousands of lips every day, and which were rewarded by the divine acknowledgment, "Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel. And I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast into the exterior darkness."

Now, my brethren, what lesson have we to learn from this praise of the heathen centurion, and this warning to God's own people, coming to us from the mouth of God himself? Simply this: that our salvation depends on the use which we make of the graces which he gives us; that the least will suffice, if we will but avail ourselves of them; but that the greatest will only serve for our eternal condemnation and ruin if we slight them and pass them by.

A simple and evident truth this surely, and yet how apt we are to forget and neglect it! We are Catholics from our infancy, we say; we belong to families which have always kept the faith. We are indeed the faithful, to whom the kingdom of heaven is promised. And if we have not been always so, but have been brought from darkness into light, then still more is the divine favor to us manifest. Will He,

then, who has done so much for us, not complete his work? We believe his word, we are in his true church, we receive his saving and life-giving sacraments; how, then, shall we not be saved? Are we not indeed those of whom he said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them life everlasting, and they shall not perish for ever, and no man shall pluck them out of my hand"?

Yes, my dear brethren, we think that we shall be saved because we are Catholics. But the truth is, that our being Catholics only gives us greater means of salvation; it is far from making our salvation sure. We have greater means and helps to save our souls; but woe be to us if we abuse them! And when we look around, and see many good and earnest souls, similar, as far as we can see, to that of the Roman centurion, deprived of the light that we have, not by their own fault, but by that of their fathers; when we see them trying to do their best with the little knowledge and the few helps that they have, must we not fear that God will take away from us the graces that we despise; that we, the children of the kingdom, will be cast into the exterior darkness, while others shall come from the east and the west and take the place which we have but do not deserve?

Let us, then, each and every one, if we have been unfaithful to the great graces which we have as Catholics—and which of us has not been so?—rouse ourselves to our danger. Yes, having the faith and the sacraments is a great privilege, but is one for which we must give a most strict account when we stand before the throne of God.

SERMON XXV.

LIVING UP TO OUR FAITH.

Jesus, hearing this, marvelled; and said to them that followed him: Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel.—GOSPEL OF THE DAY.

THE love and care of the heathen centurion for his servant should certainly put to shame many Christian masters and mistresses of to-day, who not only do not encourage their servants to approach our Lord at Holy Mass and in the sacraments, but even put obstacles in their way. However, the lesson to which I wish to direct your thoughts this morning, and which it is the primary object of the Gospel narrative to teach, is the immense importance of living up to the grace and light which God has so bountifully given us.

A few weeks ago we kept the Feast of the Epiphany, the manifestation, that is, of our Lord to the Gentiles, to those who had not till then formed part of the church of God. The Jews alone, as you are aware, were God's chosen people. To them had been given the law and the prophets, the temple and the sacrifices, and—that to which everything else led up—the promise of the Messias. And all these privileges led them to think that they were individually very excellent people, and to look down with contempt upon the rest of the world and everybody in it. Now, here was a Roman, born and brought up in heathenism, taught, doubtless, to say his prayers to Jupiter and Venus and other vile creatures like them, a man holding, too, high office, commanding a garrison of soldiers, whose duty it was to keep

down a conquered race. Well, this man, notwithstanding his bad education, notwithstanding the pride which, on account of his position, must naturally have been his, had made greater progress than the self-conceited Pharisees, with all their advantages, had ever made or were ever to make. While they lived and died in unbelief, he had already recognized in Jesus Christ the power of God; and, laying aside prejudice and pride of place and birth, he sends humbly to our Lord to ask him to heal his servant.

So clearly did he recognize our Lord's divine power that he did not think it necessary for him to come to his house. Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, as you will remember, would not be satisfied unless our Lord came down to his house; the centurion, on the contrary, stopped our Lord while he was on the way, saying: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word and my servant will be healed." So that our Lord, on hearing it, marvelled, and said: "Amen I say unto you, I have not found so great faith in Israel."

Now, how does all this apply to us? What lesson can *we* learn from these events? The answer to this question is easy and obvious. We are by God's grace the members of the church of God, and, as such, we are in possession of the means of grace—the sacraments, the word of God, the intercession and prayers of the saints, and of innumerable privileges and spiritual treasures. Above all, and as the source and spring of all spiritual life, without which everything is valueless and worthless, we have the gift of faith. Now, faith is necessary; but faith is not sufficient. Without faith no one can be saved. But we must have something more than faith. The shipwrecked

man clings for his life to anything within his reach; but unless the plank, or whatever else he has got hold of, is washed ashore, or a boat or some other means of help arrives, his plank only prolongs his agony. So is it with us. Faith is our plank; but unless this faith works by charity it will only add to our condemnation. More than this, it will, if not acted upon, get weaker and weaker, and be scarcely strong enough to move us to action. What, then, must we do? Why, we must live as our faith teaches us. First, we must learn our faith: learn the truths of our religion; next, we must practise them. If we do not do so we shall, perhaps, see what those Jews of old saw: the heathen and those who were outside of the church entering and taking their places. What our Lord said of them may, perhaps, be said of us: "I say unto you that many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

SERMON XXVI.

THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY.

I THINK you are all persuaded, my brethren, of the wrong and the danger of Catholics going to a Protestant minister for marriage; and similar ones can be given why we should not go before a magistrate for that purpose. It is plain that the authorities of the State are not the right persons to assist officially

at the sacraments of the church. It would be just as proper to ask the mayor to baptize your children as to go to him for marriage. To refer the matter of your marriage to him, however fine a man he may be personally, would be to acknowledge the right of the civil authority to take charge of religious affairs; and such a right Catholics cannot admit.

Besides, the magistrate labors under the same difficulty as a Protestant minister in conducting a Catholic marriage, of not knowing the laws of the church on the subject, and the impediments which may make the marriage invalid; that is, which may make it, though seemingly good, in reality no marriage at all. You know, for instance—to speak of this a little more fully—that the Catechism says that you should not marry within certain degrees of kindred; very well, it is not only forbidden to marry within these degrees, but a marriage within these degrees is not recognized by the laws of the church as a real and true marriage, and the parties have to be married over again, at least privately, if it is ever found out. And there are some other impediments which have the same effect. It is of no use to publish all these and try to explain them; many mistakes would be made, and matters would only become worse. No, to be safe in all affairs of this kind you must go to those who have made a special study of it; just as you find out the law of the State from your lawyer, and not from a book. Go, then, to the priest; he is the one who has made a special study of the law of the church, and the only one.

In order to make sure that Catholic marriage shall be contracted before the priest, a law has been made, and binds in some countries, and in some parts even

of this country, making it invalid, or null and void, if contracted without the presence of the parish priest of at least one of the parties. This does not, however, hold just here. But there is a very special and urgent law in this diocese, and in many others, forbidding the going to a Protestant minister for marriage, and reserving the absolution for this to the bishop, or some one authorized by him. Catholics, therefore, who are guilty of such a rash act get themselves into a very unpleasant position; still, they must, of course, try to get out of it sooner or later, and if any one finds himself in this predicament the only sensible thing to do is to come at once to the priest, who will help him as far as possible. All sins can be forgiven, and all mistakes rectified, if one has the right dispositions.

One word more on this most important subject. Some people seem to imagine that the difficulty which may come, especially in a mixed marriage, of avoiding the Protestant minister, may be got over by going both to him and to the priest, and going through the form of marriage twice. Now, let it be understood that this course cannot be thought of for a moment; for by it not only is the law broken which I have just mentioned, but a profanation of the sacrament also is committed by endeavoring to make the contract to which it is attached twice in the same case. It is as if one tried to be confirmed twice. No, in this matter there can be no compromise; a marriage in which a Catholic is a party must be put in charge of the Catholic clergy, and of no one else, except as far as mere settlements of money and the like are concerned.

Go, then, to the priest for marriage; do not think

of doing anything else. But do not go to him, as I have said some people do, for the first time just at the moment you want the ceremony performed, and expect him to marry you off-hand; for there are some very important preliminaries to be settled first, and it may take some time to settle them.

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

EPISTLE. *Rom. xiii.* 8–10. Brethren: Owe no man anything, but that you love one another. For he that loveth his neighbor, hath fulfilled the law. For "Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Thou shalt not covet." And if there be any other commandment, it is comprised in this word: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The love of the neighbor worketh no evil. Love, therefore, is the fulfilling of the law.

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. viii.* 23–27. At that time: When Jesus entered into the ship, his disciples followed him; and behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the ship was covered with waves, but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and waked him, saying: Lord, save us, we perish. And Jesus saith to them: Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith? Then rising up he commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm. But the men wondered, saying: Who is this, for even the winds and the sea obey him?

SERMON XXVII.

THE INGRATITUDE OF CHILDREN.

Brethren: owe no man anything.—EPISTLE OF THE DAY.

WE are all debtors, brethren, for we all have some accounts to settle up. There are debts we shall never

be able to redeem, debts that are just, pressing, and lasting as long as we are in this life. Such, for instance, is the debt we owe to God.

The fact of his having created us, of having brought us out of nothing, of having given us immortal souls imaged after himself, would alone put us under the gravest obligations to him; but what is that compared to the debt we owe God for having redeemed us at a nameless price, by nothing less than the Precious Blood of his own beloved Son; and, furthermore, what is all this in comparison with the debt we owe God for our sanctification, for the priceless gift of his Holy Spirit dwelling within us, breaking away the mist of error and ignorance that clouds our intellect and hides from our vision the eternal truth; that gift that endows us with strength and fortitude, with the courage that comes from conviction, with the power that makes us triumph over every weakness, every unruly passion, every snare of our enemy the devil, over every thought, word, and action that makes us unworthy of sonship with God, brotherhood with Christ, and the heritage of an eternal crown?

This debt, dear brethren, is in general obvious enough; but, while we recognize it, how often do we find in our experience that men neglect, and shamefully neglect, debts that are dependent on and derived from the debt they owe Almighty God; men who neglect debts that are as grave and binding as those which are due to the God from whom they are derived!

Now, brethren, if there is any injustice in this world more flagrant than all others, more worthy of condemnation and detestation, more certain of the

visitation of God, it is this: the neglect of our duty to our parents. "Owe no man anything." Do we owe *them* nothing? Do we not owe them much? Is there a time in our lives when that debt is not binding?

Ah! dear brethren, and what do we see in the world about us? Ingratitude, the vice of monsters, forgetfulness of ties that are nearest, dearest, and holiest. Young men, growing up into adult age, who, in their vain seeking after pleasures, become so blinded to duty, so debased in their appetites, so completely transformed into the incarnation of selfishness, as not only to disregard the law of God, but the very instincts of nature—sons who would rob and starve their parents to satisfy their mean and low appetites.

The ingratitude of children to parents is a crying sin of our times. Let us be alive to it. Let the young men and women of our day remember that they are bound to satisfy these grave and serious obligations; that they are not to heedlessly put themselves into any state that will debar them from redeeming the debts they owe, from recompensing for all the care, toil, and money expended upon them.

"Owe no man anything." Take heed of this warning also, all you who contract debts without the slightest hope of paying them; see to it that the clothes you wear, the food you eat, the pleasures you indulge in are paid for; see to it that they are not purchased by the labor and money which belong to others. You who live in fine houses, who keep yourselves in costly array, who deny yourselves no pleasures, however extravagant, take heed! Whose money pays for it? Can you stand up and with a clean

heart proclaim that this is honest? As you sit here to-day, do the words of the Apostle offer no rebuke to you, do you not feel their sting?

O brethren! let us be sparing in our debts; let us owe no man anything. The man without debts exalts himself in the eyes of his fellow-men and secures for himself a good conscience.

SERMON XXVIII.

LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOR.

He that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law.—EPISTLE OF THE DAY.

THERE can be no doubt, my brethren, that the saving of our souls sometimes seems to be a very troublesome business. There are so many laws and commandments binding on us, so many sins which we are likely to commit; and if we break any of these laws in any grievous way—if we are guilty, that is to say, of mortal sin—our salvation is lost till such time as we repair our fault. Yet it may seem that we are surrounded by so many rocks on our voyage through life that it is almost useless to try to steer clear of them; and, if we may judge by their actions, many Christians actually come to the conclusion that there is no use in trying to keep their ship off these rocks. They make up their minds that spiritual shipwreck is unavoidable, and that the only way to reach the port of heaven is to be towed in on a raft which can be made out of the sacraments at the last moment.

But really our salvation is not such a complicated and intricate affair if we would only look at it in

the right way. The course which we have to follow is not such a difficult one to bear in mind and to keep. There are many commandments, it is true; but they all have the same spirit, and if we have that spirit they will all come quite easy.

What is the spirit? Our Lord has told us. It is the love of God, and of our neighbor for God's sake. The love of God and of our neighbor gives us a short cut to the kingdom of heaven; if we are guided by it, we shall not come near the dangers that seem so many and so threatening.

Let us see how this is; how is this love going to work to keep us in the safe and sure track? It is not so hard to see. For what is it to love any one; how do we act towards one whom we really and truly love? Are we always trying to give him no more than we can help, and keep as much as we can for ourselves? Do we try to have our own way as much as possible, and never to step out of it for his sake, unless compelled by force or threats?

No, of course not. We keep far away from what will offend him. We always are trying to find out what will please him best. So if he is not unreasonable, and if he knows our desire and intention, the danger of offending him disappears.

Well, it is just so in the matter of serving God and keeping his law. The continual mortal sins into which Christians fall, and which it seems so hard to avoid, are due to their trying to run too near the rocks. No wonder they so often get wrecked in these dangerous waters. They are all the time striking on the commandments, and the whole sea seems full of them because they try to sail as near them as they can. If they would only give them a wide berth, and

keep out in the deep ocean of the love of God, sin and its forgiveness would not cause so much anxiety and trouble.

If we would only ask ourselves what will please God best, and try to give him all that he desires, as we should if we loved him as he deserves to be loved, and as we do with others whom we really do love—if we would do this instead of trying how far we can have our own way and yet come out right in the end, the whole matter of saving our souls would have a very different aspect. Now, why not try to follow this line? It is no fanciful thing beyond our power. Plenty of Christians have done it before us, and are doing it all the time.

But if we do not feel prepared, or are a little afraid to commit ourselves to this course just yet, at least we could endeavor to have some love for our neighbor, and make some sacrifice for him. We have St. Paul's word for it, you see, that even he who loves his neighbor will be sure to fulfil the law. Yes, we may feel quite sure if, by a generous love of our neighbor, we keep far off being wrecked on the last part of the Ten Commandments, that we shall run clear of the first part as well.

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany.

Epistle. *Coloss. iii.* 12–17. Brethren: Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy, and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience, bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another: even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do you also. But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection: and let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly, in all wisdom: teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing in grace in your hearts to God. All whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gospel. *St. Matt. xiii.* 24–30. At that time: Jesus spoke this parable to the multitude, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle. Then the servants of the master of the house came and said to him: Master, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it cockle? And he said to them: An enemy hath done this. And the servants said to him: Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? And he said:

No, lest while you gather up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Let both grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn; but gather the wheat into my barn.

SERMON XXIX.

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY.

Bearing with one another.—EPISTLE OF THE DAY.

No doubt you have often read about the oasis in the desert: a place of tall, shady trees, soft, green grass, and a great spring pouring out sweet, cold water. There the hot and dusty caravan stops, though it be miles out of the way; the heavy burdens are thrown off, and men and animals rest and drink and rest again. For one long, burning day they lie about on the grass and look off from their shady refuge over the yellow, sandy desert. They sleep and are rested; and as the cool dews of evening fall they take a last drink and creep away on their journey, sighing to think of the long and weary tramp to the next oasis.

Dear brethren, the oasis in the desert of this world is the Christian family. The father of the family "shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters." It is indeed but a feeble word to say that the influence of a good father is like the deep shade of a noble tree in the heat of summer. His influence is like the grace of God. Indeed, there is nothing in all this world so much like the presence

of God as the influence of a Christian father. When the instinct of the Christian people would give a name to a good priest they called him father. What is more edifying than the virtue of a good father? In him are chiefly to be seen those manly virtues which are the highest form of human excellence: hearty love, self-restraint, open frankness joining heart, hand, and voice in one. In him you admire that steadfast application to religious things, that regular use of prayer and of the sacraments, that clear knowledge of doctrine and ability to converse about it, that utter absence of frivolity, that intelligent practice of good reading. He is contented with his lot, and yet labors with steady, persistent industry. In prosperity he is modest and frugal. In adversity he is cheerful, a strong wall for others to lean against. He loves home and is fond of his wife. Gladly will he tend the babes while the mother gets the Sunday Mass, or of a Saturday evening while she goes to refresh her weary soul with a good confession. The company of his children is to him a foretaste of Paradise. He is not sour, nor is he brutal or harsh. He is not above making the children laugh or joining in their play; to make them happy and help them save their souls is his greatest joy.

Then there is the mother of the family, whose life is one unbroken round of acts of affection. The spirit of sacrifice, the craving to bear others' burdens, is her spirit. You know how a good mother watches at the sick-bed the livelong night, passing back and forth through the dark rooms, listening to every breathing, answering every sigh with a comforting word, or a cool drink, or a soft caress. Only the next world will reveal to us the loveliness of such devoted

souls; here we catch but a glimpse and an echo of it. The accents, the tones of the voice, the very silence, the manners, the ways of a good mother diffuse what Scripture calls the fragrance of ointments around her household. You know, too, how she saves and pinches to keep off debt, to dress the children neatly, to save a penny to give them a holiday, to save a dollar for hard times or a spell of sickness. And all this sacrifice is a matter of course with her But the truest glory of a mother is her patience. The patient mother is the valiant woman of Scripture. She is the woman who smothers her anger; who will suffer the impertinence of an unruly child in silence; who forgets as well as forgives; whose admonition or correction is the reluctant tribute of a tender heart to the child's well-being. Do you want to know how she is able to do this? The secret of it is that she finds time—in the heavy duty of being everybody's servant—to attend to religion; to belong to the Rosary Society and make her monthly Communion; to give alms to the poor from her hard savings; to visit and watch with sick or afflicted neighbors. It is, in a word, because she ever gazes in spirit upon that Holy Family where Mary was mother that she is able to be a good Christian mother.

When I began I intended to say something of the good boys and girls; while we have been engaged with father and mother the children have passed by. Perhaps we shall overtake them next Sunday.

SERMON XXX.

THE DUTY OF GOOD EXAMPLE.

Use your endeavor to walk honestly towards them that are without.—1 THESS. iv. 11.

THE holiness of the church, my dear brethren, is for us who belong to her a thing so evident and clear that we can no more think it necessary to prove it than we can think it necessary to prove that the sun shines in the heavens. The practical and imperative way in which the church enforces holiness of life on each and every one of us is something with which we are so familiar that no shadow of doubt can enter into our minds as to its necessity. The means of grace which she offers to us, and of which she even requires us to make use, the sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord himself which she gives us, the penances she imposes upon us by way of fasting and abstinence, the warnings which she is ever giving us of the condemnation which will fall upon impenitent sinners, these and ten thousand other things make the sanctity of the church so well known that it is not so much an article of faith as a thing which we see with our own eyes and which falls under our own experience.

But there are those who are without these advantages. There are many around us, our near neighbors and friends, who are outside the church, not through their own fault, but by birth and education. These are not in possession of those means of knowing the church and her sanctity of which we are possessed; and in order to have this knowledge they depend to

a very large extent upon ourselves. I wish this morning to call your attention to the responsibility which rests upon us on this account, and to one or two practical ways in which we are accountable to God for what that responsibility involves.

Now, that we lie under this responsibility is a truth not very hard to see. For, as I have said, those outside the church are ignorant of the doctrine and practices of the church. From their earliest years they have had utterly false and erroneous information given them about the church, an information so false and erroneous that they do not think it necessary or even right to make inquiries. How, then, are they to have the truth brought home to them? What way is there of spreading the light? Almost the only way, and certainly a way so necessary that without it all others are futile and vain, is that those who are called Catholics should lead such lives as the church requires of them. Now, if we do not do this we are of course responsible to God, as every man, be he Catholic or be he Protestant, is responsible to God for his whole life and every action in it. But more than that, a special responsibility in this time and in this country lies at the door of every Catholic man and every Catholic woman. Every Catholic man and woman who does not lead a good life is a stumbling-block and a rock of offence standing in the way and preventing many poor souls from seeing and embracing that truth which is necessary for their salvation; and those Catholics whose way of living forms such a stumbling block will have to give a strict account to God not merely for their own sins and for themselves, but also for the souls of others whom they have ruined.

Now, I am going on this account to ask you some questions which I hope you will answer honestly and conscientiously. And they will be questions about matters on which the world outside is competent to judge; and, therefore, if we fail in this respect we shall meet with its condemnation, and become hindrances to the knowledge of the truth.

First: There is nothing of which the business world thinks so much as truth, uprightness, integrity in business matters. To pay debts promptly, to do work squarely, to execute contracts faithfully, these are some of the marks of an honest man. Now, in view of what I have said, ask yourselves, is this way of acting the mark of all Catholics? Will a man who wants to get a house built, who is looking for a trustworthy clerk or assistant, choose out Catholics in preference to others, because he knows that they are worthy of trust? If this is not the case, if the being a Catholic is no guarantee of trustworthiness, you will have to answer to God for the bad effect your dishonesty has upon those outside.

And now a question for women. You all know in what virtue consists, the glory and honor of women. You all know what the world expects of women. You know, too, how much the church makes of modesty and chastity, in what honor she holds them, how strict she is in inculcating their necessity. Now, one of the effects of genuine modesty and chastity is to overawe and overpower the approaches of the unclean and impure. There is a majesty in virtue which lays low and keeps at its level vileness and impurity. Is every one who comes near a Catholic girl or woman conscious of this influence? Is there something about every Catholic

girl and woman which makes it clear to every dirty fellow that he must go elsewhere if he wishes to find a victim and a means of satisfying his disgraceful passions? It ought to be so, for the soul of every Catholic girl and woman, over and above the majesty of natural virtue, is the abode and dwelling-place of the grace of God. And if you are true children of the church such will be the effect your presence will have.

Well, my brethren, ask yourselves these questions; answer them honestly; and, if you find that you have done wrong, amend, not merely for your own sake but for that of those outside.

SERMON XXXI.

BEARING ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS.

Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another if any have a complaint against one another: even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do you also.—EPISTLE OF THE DAY (Col. iii. 13).

PERHAPS you may think, my dear friends, that we have a good deal to say about this matter of charity and forgiveness, and if you do you are probably right; it was not long ago that we had occasion to remind you of it in one of these little morning instructions. But why should we not speak of it often? Is not the love of our neighbor the second great commandment, like to and founded on the first? Does not St. John also make it the test of our salvation? "We know," he says, "that we have passed from death to life"; and why? Is it because we fast, say

long prayers, visit the church, or even because we receive the sacraments often? No, it is "because we love the brethren." And he continues: "He that loveth not, abideth in death. . . . We ought," he goes on to say, "to lay down our lives for the brethren."

In the latter years of the life of St. John, when he had become so old and feeble that he had to be carried to the church, and was not able to preach at any length to his beloved people, he would still give them a little short sermon. It was very short; not even a five minute sermon; and it was not fresh every Sunday, but always the same. It was just this: "Little children, love one another." But his people, in spite of their great reverence and affection for him, were something like people nowadays, and got rather tired of hearing this same old story. They wanted something more novel and startling, and one day they asked him: "Master, why do you never tell us anything but this about loving one another?" He answered: "Because it is the Lord's command, and if it is fulfilled it is sufficient."

If St. John, then, preached about this matter of charity every Sunday, certainly we may be allowed to speak of it several times in the year. And you, my dear Christians, will not lose anything by hearing about it pretty often. For the matter is one in which there is always great room for improvement for us all. St. John said "little children"; but he was not speaking to the Sunday-school, if, indeed, he had one; no, it was to the children, big as well as little, children all of God and of his holy church, that his words were addressed.

And these words are more needed now than they

were then. Why, in the early times Christians used to be known from other people by their love and charity for each other. It was this that made converts to the faith, more, perhaps, than preaching or miracles. "See," said the world, "how these Christians love one another." But now I am afraid it would be hard to pick out very many Christians by this test. No; it is more likely that our infidel friends would say of all the Christians that they happen to know: "See how these Christians are all the time quarrelling with each other! They never seem to be content unless they can show their pride by having at least some one who is not supposed to be worthy of their acquaintance. They go to church and say their prayers—oh! yes; but perhaps there is some person, even in the next pew, that they used to know, but have not spoken to for years, and have no notion of ever speaking to, unless, perhaps, on their death-bed if the priest should insist on it. Bearing with one another, indeed! Is it possible that one of their Apostles told them to do that? Why, they do not put up with half as much as a sensible man would who had no faith at all. Let them suffer the least even fancied slight or indignity, and there is an end of all their friendship. Forgiving one another, as they say the Lord has forgiven them? Well, if the Lord forgives as they do, his forgiveness does not seem to amount to much."

My brethren, depend on it, those not of our faith feel often this way, though they may not say it right out. And they are not far wrong. The kind of bearing with others, the kind of forgiveness, that is given them by those who have the name of Christians is too often one that will not stand the test of God's

judgment. I am afraid that many pious people have found themselves in the wrong place after death on account of it. Let those who still remain profit by this lesson while they have time.

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany.

EPISTLE. 1 *Thessalon. i.* 2–10 Brethren: We give thanks to God always for you all: making a remembrance of you in our prayers without ceasing, being mindful of the work of your faith, and labor, and charity, and of the enduring of the hope of our Lord Jesus Christ before God and our Father: knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election: for our gospel hath not been to you in word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much fulness, as you know what manner of men we have been among you for your sakes. And you became followers of us, and of the Lord: receiving the word in much tribulation, with joy of the Holy Ghost: so that you were made a pattern to all who believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you was spread abroad the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place, your faith which is towards God, is gone forth, so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves relate of us, what manner of entrance we had unto you; and how you were converted to God from idols, to serve the living and true God. And to wait for his Son from Heaven (whom he raised from the dead), Jesus who hath delivered us from the wrath to come.

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. xiii.* 31–35. At that time: Jesus spoke to the multitude this parable: The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. Which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown up it is greater than any herbs, and becometh a tree, so that

the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof.

Another parable he spoke to them. The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened. All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the multitudes: and without parables he did not speak to them. That the word might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world."

SERMON XXXII.

HOW TO MAKE CONVERTS.

The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened.—GOSPEL OF THE DAY.

BY the kingdom of heaven is meant in this Gospel, as in many other places, the holy Catholic Church; the spiritual kingdom of God, which is of heaven, though on earth; and leaven is another word for what we call yeast, and is used in the making of bread.

Our Divine Lord, then, tells us that his church, to which we belong, is like yeast; and his meaning, if we consider a little, is plain enough. It is, that as a little yeast is put into a mass of flour or dough, to raise it, as we say, so he has put his church, which was in the beginning a very small thing, into the world, to raise the world to life and the knowledge and love of him.

And certainly his comparison of the church to

yeast was fully justified. In the beginning the world was everywhere attracted and moved in spite of itself by the lives of the first Christians. The heathen could not help admiring their mutual charity, their patient and forgiving dispositions, their temperance and self-sacrifice; and they could not refrain from asking themselves and each other: "Who are these that they call Christians? What do they believe, and what do they teach? What is it that makes them so loving and so amiable, so calm and peaceful, so happy in all their troubles, so ready to assist and serve not only each other, but all the world beside?" But no one could answer these questions but the Christians themselves; so the heathen had to go and get instructed in this faith which had been made so charming to them. Thus they were converted, and in their turn became apostles in the same way to others.

So the leaven spread through the mass; the contagion, so to speak, of faith, piety, and virtue was diffused over the world; people caught it from their neighbors. The Apostles had no need to make many converts in any one place which they visited. If they got a few, these few would take care of the rest. The little congregations which they founded grew and multiplied wonderfully, in spite of distress and persecution, by the force of the holy lives and good example of their members.

But was this way of growing only meant for God's church in the beginning? No, by no means. Our Lord says that the leaven of his kingdom was to go on working "till the whole was leavened." Does it, then, still move the world in this way? If so, how rapidly ought the church now to increase, when

there are a thousand faithful for one in those early days!

Yes, my brethren, it ought. For in spite of the boasts which the world is making of its reformed religion, especially just now, and of its progress and civilization, it feels at heart very uneasy. It has fallen away from God, and lost the truth, and in its inmost soul it knows this; and it is looking for some one to bring light to its darkness, and to put its confusion in order.

Why, then, does not the church increase more rapidly? Why does not the world now come to us as it did in those former days of its anxiety and doubt? Prejudices it has now against us, I know; but it had its prejudices then, too. There are many slanders believed against us, but that has been so from the very beginning; our Lord warned us of this, and it is a mark of his true church to be thus belied. So this is not the real trouble; no, the trouble is that most Christians do not by the good odor of their lives induce the world to inquire into their faith, and thus overcome its prejudices. We may argue till we and every one else are ready to drop, but we shall never be as the first disciples were—the leaven of God's kingdom—till we show by our lives that there is something more in us than the natural feelings, good or bad, which make up the lives of others. Christians who forgive and excuse their enemies, who have charity for all, who are chaste and pure in word and deed, who are humble and self-denying, those are the ones—and, thank God, such there are—who make converts; and if we want the leaven of the kingdom to spread and raise the world to Christ we must be like them.

SERMON XXXIII.

THE BLESSINGS OF THE FAITH.

I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world. —MATT. xiii. 35.

THESE are the concluding words of to-day's Gospel, and they refer to the great truths that are made known to us through the revelation of Almighty God. For as believers in a divine revelation we know things that have been hidden from the beginning, and we have a knowledge that transcends all human knowledge. Our faith gives us light which our reason could never supply. We might spend our whole lives in the most profound study and investigation, we might dip into all the systems and master all the sciences, and we should still be ignorant of certain truths which our faith makes known to us. When we look back over the world's history and see the greatest minds of every age and country groping in the dark, seeking in vain for the knowledge which we possess, we can appreciate what a glorious privilege it is to be enlightened by the divine light of faith. For where its rays do not penetrate there can never be sufficient security in regard to the most vital truths of human origin and human destiny. We see the sad evidences of this all around us in the world to-day. Men who refuse to accept the revelation of Almighty God and the teachings of his church are in ignorance, or at least they are in doubt, about the origin and end of life. They are even in doubt as to the existence of God himself, though the universe by a thousand voices proclaims his presence and their own souls reflect his image.

From age to age the human mind busies itself over the deep questions of philosophy and the discoveries of science. From generation to generation men seek to solve the great problems of life by the force of reason ; but revelation alone can adequately disclose the "things hidden from the foundation of the world," and without its divine light and guidance mankind must ever remain liable to sink into darkness and doubt.

How widely different is the state of the mind established in the settled convictions of faith from that where there is nothing but the theories and opinions of human knowledge ! In the one there is the repose of certainty, security, and peace ; in the other there are many puzzles unsolved, promptings unsatisfied, disquiet, and unrest. One short lesson learned in the school of divine faith will give more light and bring more comfort to the soul than all the knowledge that can be acquired in a life time in the schools of human learning.

Great stress is laid nowadays on secular education. And we are told that what the country needs, what the world needs, are intelligent and cultivated men and women ; and certainly education is an excellent thing, and most desirable for all. But why make so much of a knowledge that concerns only the petty things of earth and the fleeting course of time, and ignore a knowledge that relates to the Infinite God in heaven and a life that is everlasting ? What will it profit us on our death-bed to have learned the facts in the world's history, to have been familiar with the teachings of philosophy and the discoveries of science, to have studied the writings and mastered the thoughts of men, if we know nothing of our Creator

and our relation to him and the course of our destiny; nothing of the preparation we should make beforehand and the thoughts that should animate us as we stand on the brink of eternity?

Here is the great contrast between the knowledge that God imparts to us and all human science—the one imparts to us the truths of eternity, the other teaches us the truths of time; and the difference between them is just as great as that between time and eternity. And if, as is generally the case, we estimate the value of a thing by its importance and permanence, there is surely no term of comparison here. The little child who has learned the first page of the Catholic Catechism has already acquired a knowledge which forty centuries of human speculation have never reached, and the simplest believer in Jesus Christ and his church is possessed of a wisdom far higher, far holier, than was ever conceived of by the greatest sages of old.

Let us realize, then, that faith is the highest knowledge, that it discloses to us "things hidden from the foundation of the world," and makes us sharers in the knowledge of God himself, and therefore elevates and crowns our reason.

SERMON XXXIV.

GOOD EXAMPLE AS A MEANS OF MAKING CONVERTS.

The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened.

This may seem a very strange comparison, my

brethren, if, instead of letting it in at one ear, as the saying is, and out at the other, we stop to think of it a moment. For what sort of likeness is there between that glorious kingdom of heaven, which we hope some day to enter, and a little leaven or yeast put into flour to raise it and make it into bread? Surely, we should say, none at all. What could our Lord have meant when he said that the two were alike?

But let us think a little more about the matter. Is the kingdom of heaven of which he was speaking that heaven into which all the saved are to enter? Or is there not some other meaning which we may give to the words?

There is another meaning, and it is the true one in this place and in many others in the Gospel. It is the kingdom of God or of heaven, not in heaven, but on earth, of which our Saviour is here speaking. When he says the kingdom of heaven, he means the kingdom which he came to establish, his holy Catholic Church.

But how is this leaven, or yeast? Well, it is not so very hard to see this. It is because, being put into the world in the beginning in the form of a few weak, poor, and unlearned men and women, like the little spoonful of yeast put into a great mass of flour, it soon spread through the whole known world, and is even now spreading in the same way, changing and influencing in many ways all whom it meets with, even if it does not fully convert them: just as the yeast is spread through the whole of the dough, raising it and making it into good and healthy food.

Yes, my brethren, this was the way that the church spread through the world and made its converts, especially in the early times. It was not only by preach-

ing. The Apostles and their successors did not have much chance to preach to the world in general. They were not allowed to do so; public preaching would have brought down on them much greater persecutions than those which they actually suffered, and it would have required great miracles on God's part to preserve his church had such preaching been tried, especially in the great cities. No, they had to teach their doctrine, as we may say, on the sly; in fact, part of it was reserved for those who had already become Christians. It may seem strange now, but in early times no one was allowed to hear anything about the real presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament till after he had been baptized. This was called the discipline of the secret, and was kept up for a long time.

So, you see, Christianity was not learned in the pagan Roman Empire so much by preaching as by private instruction joined with good example. One person caught it from another, as the particles of dough get raised by those next to them. Masters and mistresses, for instance, caught it from their servants, others from their friends and acquaintances—first, from noticing their virtues, so different from those which the pagans had. They saw how gentle and affectionate, and still how courageous, they were; how they bore suffering without a murmur; how they shrank from the idols worshipped by others, and from all the vices which these idols represented; how little they cared for pleasure; how each sacrificed himself for his neighbor. "See," said the world, "how these Christians love one another." Then the world began to inquire what was the reason of this love and of the other Christian virtues; and so reli-

gion spread from the lowest to the highest, till at last the Roman emperors themselves knelt before the cross.

Things are somewhat changed now, it is true. The Catholic faith can now be preached and taught openly; still, it is almost the same as if it could not, for people outside the church will seldom come and hear it, or even read books explaining it. The discipline of the secret still prevails, not because we wish it, but because the world does. So now, as before, the faith must catch and spread from one person to another if it is to make much progress in such countries as this of ours. Protestants run away from the priest, and will have nothing to say to him; so it will not do to say that making converts is the priest's business and does not concern you. No, my brethren, making converts is your business, as things stand, perhaps even more than his. But how are they to be made? Not by cursing, lying, and drunkenness, sins too common, alas! among many who call themselves Catholics, and specially liable to be noticed by others. It was not by these that the first Christians converted the world. Not by quarrels and slanders; it is not by these that you will convince people that we Christians love one another. Turn, then, from the vices which repel, and practise instead virtues which will attract unbelievers, and lead them to inquire why you are so good instead of wondering that you are so bad. Then they will come to you, as they did of old to your ancestors in the faith, to learn the doctrine which has taught you these virtues; and you will be, as you should be, the leaven which is to leaven the world.

Septuagesima Sunday.

EPISTLE. 1 *Cor. ix.* 24; *x.* 5. Brethren: Know you not that they who run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain.

And every one that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things; and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible one. I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty: I so fight, not as one beating the air: but I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become reprobate. For I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. And all in Moses were baptized, in the cloud and in the sea; and they did all eat the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink (and they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ). But with the most of them God was not well pleased.

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. xx.* 1–16. At that time: Jesus said to his disciples this parable: The kingdom of heaven is like to a master of a family, who went early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing in the market-place idle. And he said to them: Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give

you what shall be just. And they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did in like manner. But about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing, and he saith to them: Why stand you here all the day idle? They say to him: Because no man hath hired us. He saith to them: Go you also into my vineyard. And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward: Call the laborers and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first. When, therefore, they came, who had come about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first also came, they thought that they should have received more, and they also received every man a penny. And when they received it, they murmured against the master of the house, saying: These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, that have borne the burden of the day and the heats. But he answering one of them, said: Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what is thine and go thy way: I will also give to this last even as to thee. Or, is it not lawful for me to do what I will? is thy eye evil because I am good? So shall the last be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.

SERMON XXXV.

BODILY MORTIFICATION.

"I CHASTISE my body," says St. Paul in the Epistle of to-day, "and bring it into subjection." In these few words he gives us the great reason for the Catholic doctrine and practice of bodily mortification and penance, which Protestants so often find fault with.

"I chastise my body," he says, "and bring it into subjection"; that is, "I chastise it, because I want to bring it into subjection. I want to tame it, to become its master; so I give it a good beating, I starve it now and then, and treat it badly generally, that it may learn to obey me."

That is the great idea of mortification, my brethren, in a nutshell. Every one knows that if you want to break a vicious horse you have to put him through a pretty severe course of treatment before he will be subject to your will. And every one knows that the body is naturally unruly, like a vicious horse; the body is always craving for things which it would be better that it should not have, and it will have them in spite of us if we do not take care. So, to subject it thoroughly to reason, we must put it through a severe course; otherwise, some time or other, it will get the better of us, and have its own way.

And there is a great deal more need of taming our own bodies than there is of breaking horses. For the horse can only kill our body, but our bodies can kill our souls; and furthermore, if we do not want to take the trouble of breaking a horse, we can shoot him, or get somebody else to take him; but we cannot in any way lawfully get rid of our bodies till such time as God sees fit to take them from us. We are tied fast to them, and cannot get away. So we are absolutely obliged to conquer them, if we do not want to be conquered by them. In other words, if we do not want our bodies to be a frequent cause and occasion of mortal sin to us, we must to some considerable extent practise mortification.

That is the Catholic and true doctrine, as taught

by the church, and put into practice, in some degree at least, by all the faithful who obey her laws. And it is also common sense. Every one must admit that the body is the great cause and source of mortal sin to far the greater number of people, and that if its appetites were thoroughly brought under control our souls would be saved from very great dangers, which otherwise they cannot escape. If, then, it is any object to escape these dangers—and no sensible man can deny that it is—one does not need to be a Christian, but only to have the gift of reason, and to look a little into himself and into the world about him, and he must grant that the bodily penances and mortifications which the church insists on are not foolish or superstitious, but in the highest degree prudent and wise.

But I know, my dear brethren, that you do not think that the mortification of the body required by the church is useless or superstitious; I give you too much credit for faith as well as for reason to imagine that. You do need courage, though—we all need it—to act up to what we believe in this matter. Let us then look this question fairly in the face. There is heaven before us to be gained, and sin to be overcome that we may gain it; and here are our bodies, with their depraved, corrupted, and often dangerous and sinful desires, standing in the way of our gaining it. If we will only determine in earnest to get the mastery of them, heaven is almost sure; if we do not, they will be very likely to carry us to hell. If we overcome them, we save ourselves and them, and make them a help instead of a hindrance to us; if not, they will do their best to drag us down with themselves to destruction, and if in the mercy of God

we may indeed be saved it will be as by fire. Shall we not take a little trouble when such tremendous interests are at stake? Shall we trust to luck when a little effort will make heaven sure?

SERMON XXXVI.

SUDDEN DEATH.

Watch ye, therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour.—MATT. XXV. 13.

THESE words, my dear brethren, are taken from the parable of the ten virgins who went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride. Five of them, being wise and prudent, took oil in their lamps, that they might be ready at any moment to light them; but the five foolish ones gave no thought to the matter. At midnight, when they least expected it, the cry was heard, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye forth to meet him." Then the foolish virgins tried to borrow oil from the wise to fill their lamps, but were told to go and buy for themselves. While they were gone the bridegroom came; they were not ready; the door of the marriage-feast was closed when they returned, and in answer to their entreaty, "Lord, lord, open to us," came only the words, "I know you not." "Watch ye, therefore," says our Lord, in concluding this parable, "because you know not the day nor the hour."

Brethren, the meaning of this parable is so plain that it hardly needs even a word of explanation. Yet how unheeded it is, alas! by the majority of Christians!

What does this oil mean that the foolish virgins neglected to provide for themselves and to have in their lamps? What but the grace of God, with which our souls should be provided, and without which they are in the state of mortal sin? If this precious oil of God's grace is in our souls we are ready at any moment to meet the Bridegroom; no matter how suddenly the cry is made that he is coming, we can go forth with confidence to meet him and feel sure that the door of the marriage-feast of heaven will not be closed to us.

But if we have not this oil, if the lamp of our soul is empty, if we are in the state of mortal sin, what dismay comes on us, what terrible fear and distress of mind, when we are suddenly told to prepare for death! We have been saying all along, "Oh! there will be plenty of time," and now there is *not* plenty of time. God is coming to meet us, and to demand of us an account of our lives; we cannot hide from his face, and he will not wait. The hour fixed in the eternal counsels of his wisdom has come, the hour on which everything depends, the hour for which the years of our life should have been one long preparation, those years so carelessly thrown away.

Friends may stand around us who have not wasted the oil in their lamps as we have ours. Their souls may be full of the grace of God, preserved and increased continually by prayer and good works, by the love of God and frequent confession and Communion. They may have enough and to spare; but they cannot lend to us. "No," they must say to us, "go rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. Go rather," that is, "to the regular sources of that grace, the sacraments, which our Lord has placed in

his church, to give life to the dead. Send for the priest, and with his help fill the lamp of your soul, and prepare to meet our Lord."

But too often it is as in the parable of the virgins. While the foolish Christian, who has put off his preparation for death, who has lived in the state of sin, expecting to die in the state of grace, goes to fill his lamp, his Lord comes, finds him, and judges him as he is. The priest comes, but only to look on him lying dead. Or even if the oil of grace is brought to the sinner, he has not, perhaps, the price to pay for it; that is, he has not those dispositions of sincere penitence and amendment of life, without which all sacraments are vain and ineffectual.

Brethren, it is a fearful point in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins that not one of the five who were so carelessly unprepared was able to have her lamp ready to meet the bridegroom in his coming. It should teach us to expect that, as a rule, a man must die as he has lived. No doubt there are exceptions; the mercy of God is over all, and wills not that the sinner should perish. But the only safe way, the only way, indeed, that is not the wildest folly, and even insanity, is to live as all good Christians do live, continually prepared for death; with the grace of God always in their souls, with no stain of mortal sin on them; with "their loins girt, and lamps burning in their hands"; and "like to men who wait for their lord when he shall return from the wedding: that when he cometh and knocketh they may open to him immediately."

SERMON XXXVII.

LIFE'S PURPOSE.

Brethren, know you not that they that run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that you may obtain.—1 Cor. ix. 24.

There is a great question, my dear brethren, that comes home some time or other to every man in the world who is not entirely taken up with the passing pleasures and fleeting interests of the moment; to every man, that is, who lives as a man, and not as a mere child. It is the most important and vital of all questions; and it will return often on us, put it away as much as we will. It is this: "What am I here for? what is the use, what is the purpose of all this life which I am living? What is the goal to which it is tending? what end do I hope to obtain?"

Yes, we must look forward in this way sometimes, and we must try to find something in the future better worth having than what we have now, or our life, with its labors and fatigues, becomes a burden almost too great to be borne.

So one man proposes wealth, another knowledge and learning, another fame and honor as his object in life; or at least he looks forward to bringing up children to whom he can leave his memory and his name, and who will carry on and complete the work he has begun.

But we Christians do not seek for an answer to this question. The answer is written plainly by faith in our souls; we may try to forget it or put something else in its place, but we shall find no

other in which we can believe. The answer for us is, that this life has no end or object in itself which can justify or explain it, but that it is a time of trial, of probation for something better; that we live in order that it may be seen from our life whether we are worthy to share in an eternal life; that only beyond the grave can what the soul longs for be attained, and that we may fail in attaining it if we do not keep it steadily in view and work for it with all the strength we have.

So our life is a race, a struggle for an immense and unspeakable prize to come at its end; and a prize which will never be offered again if we do not secure it this time. If we fail in this life our failure can never be retrieved; nor will anything else ever be offered us to live for. For all eternity we shall see what we might have had, and shall be tortured with vain remorse; and nothing else will give us even a moment's peace. This eternity will be intolerable, even were there no other pains in it; but on account of this alone we shall seek death for ever, and never find it.

And from this race, this struggle in which we are now entered, there is no escape. We cannot withdraw and have our name struck from the list of contestants. There is no half-way place which we can take between triumph and defeat. "Know you not," says St. Paul, "that all run in the race?" Yes, a power greater than ours has put us on the track, and is drawing us along it, whether we will or no. We cannot remain as we are, for He whose power has placed us here has made us for himself, and we cannot rest till we rest in him.

Since, then, we have to run in the race; since we

have to suffer, to labor, to pursue a happiness which we now have not; since we must do this even in spite of ourselves; since we cannot sit down and give up our place, what folly it is to run to no purpose, to turn aside and try to forget the only possible reward for all our toil, the only thing that can make the life which we must live worth living! Let St. Paul's words on this Sunday sink into our minds; and, since we have to run in this race on which everything depends, let us not trifle and lose its precious moments, but so run that we may obtain.

Sexagesima Sunday.

EPISTLE. 2 *Cor. xi.* 19–*xii.* 9. Brethren: You gladly suffer the foolish: whereas you yourselves are wise. For you suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take from you, if a man be extolled, if a man strike you on the face. I speak according to dishonor, as if we had been weak in this part. Wherein if any man is bold (I speak foolishly) I am bold also. They are Hebrews; so am I. They are Israelites; so am I. They are the seed of Abraham; so am I. They are the ministers of Christ (I speak as one less wise), I am more; in many more labors, in prisons more frequently, in stripes above measure, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I was in the depth of the sea; in journeys often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren: in labor and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in many fastings, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things which are without: my daily instance, the solicitude for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I do not burn? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my infirmity. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for

ever, knoweth that I lie not. At Damascus the governor of the nation under Aretas the king, guarded the city of the Damascenes to apprehend me. And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and so escaped his hands. If I must glory (for it is not expedient indeed); but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body I know not, or out of the body I know not: God knoweth), such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man, whether in the body or out of the body, I know not: God knoweth; that he was caught up into paradise; and heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter. Of such an one I will glory; but for myself I will glory nothing, but in my infirmities. For even if I would glory, I shall not be foolish: for I will say the truth. But I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth in me, or anything he heareth from me. And lest the greatness of the revelations should puff me up, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me. For which thing I thrice besought the Lord, that it might depart from me; and he said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Gospel. *St. Luke viii.* 4–15. At that time: When a very great multitude was gathered together and hastened out of the cities to him, he spoke by a similitude. A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it, choked it. And some fell upon good ground; and sprung up, and yielded fruit a hundredfold. Saying these things, he cried out: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his

disciples asked him what this parable might be. To whom he said: To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to the rest in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. And they by the wayside are they that hear: then the devil cometh, and taketh the word out of their heart, lest believing they should be saved. Now they upon the rock, are they who when they hear, receive the word with joy: and these have no roots; who believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns, are they who have heard, and going their way, are choked with the cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit. But that on the good ground, are they who in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience.

SERMON XXXVIII.

PERSEVERANCE AFTER A MISSION.

Power is made perfect in infirmity.—Epistle of the Day.

Not so very long ago, my dear brethren, we had a great mission in this church. It was well attended—that was almost a matter of course; for, thank God, every one considers it a shame to neglect so great a grace when it is offered, and the Catholic who refuses to attend a mission is regarded by those who know him as being in a very bad and dangerous state.

And the mission, I trust, was on the whole well made by those who attended it. They made good confessions; they felt true sorrow for their sins,

And they made real purposes of amendment against their vices, whatever they might be. The drunkard promised to abstain from drink for God's sake, though it might be almost the only thing that gave him pleasure; the impure promised to abandon and stamp out his evil passions and habits; the one who had neglected Mass and the other duties of his religion out of laziness, gluttony, or indifference, promised to be faithful to them for the future.

But how many of the thousands who made these promises have kept them? How many of those who were not leading a Christian life before the mission are now doing so? Some certainly; yes, some of the seed of the word of God, of which our Lord speaks in to-day's Gospel, which was then sown, has indeed sprung up and borne fruit, it may be a hundredfold. Some, in a good heart, hearing the word, have kept it, and brought forth fruit in patience.

But, alas! how many, on the other hand, have been like the wayside, the rock, or the thorns in our Lord's parable! The seed sprang up, and remained for a few days or weeks; but now, if you look for it, it has gone, trampled under foot, choked, or withered away.

Now, what is the reason of all this sad want of perseverance? Was it that those who made their confessions then were not sincere; that they made promises which they did not really expect to keep? Perhaps that may have been so with some of them; for some people do seem to think that one cannot be expected to avoid mortal sin, unless he is a priest or a religious, and even call others hypocrites who believe that they can and do avoid it. But there were others who failed—and these were a great many

—because they thought they had only to say that they would do the thing, and that then the thing would be done.

They did not know how weak they were ; perhaps they do not know it yet. They will find it out some time, as those do who have often taken the pledge in vain ; and then it may be that they will despair, which will be the worst of all. But if they use this knowledge right it will be their salvation.

And how will knowing that they are weak save them ? Will it make them strong ? Yes, but not in their own strength ; it will save them by making them turn to the infinite power of God. This is what our Lord told St. Paul, as we learn in the Epistle of to-day, when he asked to have his temptation removed. He said to him : " My grace is sufficient for thee, for power is made perfect in infirmity." The more we know our weakness the stronger we shall be, if our terror and distrust of ourselves will only make us turn to God in frequent, earnest, and fervent prayer for help, and in continual approach to the sacraments which he has given for our aid.

Oh ! if Christians would only learn this one great truth, how the whole face of things would change ! How the most obstinate vices, the most deep-rooted spiritual disease, would melt away at the touch of the Great Physician of our souls, if we would only go to him continually for their cure ! How easily we should overcome the enemy if we would only understand that of ourselves we cannot overcome him, but that we can do all things in Him who strengtheneth us ; and, understanding this, would go to him for the strength that we cannot get elsewhere !

My brethren, you who have fallen and now fall so often, I beg you to put this truth in practice. You fail, and why? Because you have undertaken more than you can do. You wish to succeed? I hope so. Well, there is only one way. Do as you have done before, but also call God to the rescue. Pray frequently and fervently, and go often to confession and Communion, and success, instead of being hopeless, will be sure.

SERMON XXXIX.

GOOD SEED BUT NO HARVEST.

THE Gospel of to-day, my brethren, is the parable of the sower who went out to sow his seed. Our Lord himself explains the parable, and tells us that the seed is the word of God; and the real sower of this word, of course, is God, from whom it comes, and from whom it has all its life and power.

The ground in which this seed is sown is the mind and heart of man; or, to put the matter in a practical shape, it is your heart and mine. There are many people in this world to whom very little of it has come, at least compared with what we have had; but we cannot complain that we have not had our share. The word of God spoken by the mouth of man, in sermons, instructions, counsels, and warnings, from the altar and in the confessional, and not only from the priests but also from others who have been the ministers of God and the channels of his grace to us—it is certainly no strange or new sound in our

ears. And not only in this way have we continually heard God's voice, but often, perhaps even more frequently, have we heard it coming immediately from him, and speaking in our own souls.

Plenty of this seed has, then, been sown in us; but where is the fruit, the harvest that should have come from it? Seed is not put in the ground merely to be kept there. No, it cannot be kept there; if it is not destroyed or carried away it must grow and multiply.

The seed of God's word should, therefore, have grown in us. It should have been the beginning and the increase in us of the spiritual life, which should have grown stronger in us day by day from the time when we first came to the use of reason until the present moment.

Now, how is it in fact? As we look back on our lives, do we find that this has actually been fulfilled in them? Are we better, more perfect, nearer to God now than we were last year, or even ten years ago? Is it not rather to be feared that we have fallen back; that we are more careless, perhaps, even about mortal sin, than we were in times past; or, to say the least, that habits of venial sin have gained on us, instead of being overcome; that our prayers are less fervent, our reception of the sacraments less frequent, our love of God weaker than in the years which have gone by?

Holy Scripture tells us that the "path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forwards and increaseth even to perfect day." "The just"—that is, those who are habitually in God's grace, who have and keep the life of God in their souls. The Christian virtues, the seeds of which were put in our souls at

baptism, should have been growing during all our lives; they should have become strong trees now, deeply rooted and spreading far and wide. Even if they were killed at any time by the frost of mortal sin, they should have been speedily brought to life and renewed their growth before they had decayed and rotted away.

Brethren, I need not ask you if this has been so with you. With some, no doubt, it has. They may not feel that they have drawn nearer to God, but really they have. Temptation does not find the material in them to work on that it did; to avoid evil and to do good is every day easier and easier; they have still cause to fear, it is true, but still more and more ground to hope.

But, alas! how many there are in whom there is no sign of this growth which should have come from the seed which has been sown in them! Their light has not increased: no, it is almost always extinguished; when it does seem to shine it is but to flicker for a moment, and to disappear. The seed is no sooner sown in them than it is trampled under foot or carried away by the birds of the air.

Brethren, if the life of grace is not growing in our souls; if we are not falling less frequently, and rising more easily from our falls, than before, our path is not that of the just, and the seed of the word of God has not yet taken that root which will make it bring forth a hundredfold.

SERMON XL.

THE USES OF TEMPTATION.

My grace is sufficient for thee ; for power is made perfect in infirmity.—2 Cor. xii. 9.

To all who are striving to lead a good Christian life the example of the saints is a powerful means of encouragement, and the more so when we see in the saints themselves the evidences of our common human nature, when we see them encountering the same difficulties and struggling with the same temptations which we ourselves experience. Their great deeds and miracles exalt them to a sphere far above us, and, while they fill us with admiration, would yet have a tendency to discourage us were it not for those other passages in their lives when they seem to be brought down to our own level by contact with those evil influences which are ever seeking to sway our fallen nature. The fact that the saints have had to engage in conflict with the basest passions is so far from lowering them in our eyes that it only serves to make them dearer to us and to stimulate us to a more faithful imitation of them.

And so St. Paul's account of himself in the Epistle of to-day has been a ground of encouragement to many a soul that had grown weary of an incessant warfare with temptation. The Apostle tells us that, in spite of the wondrous revelations and heavenly favors which he had received from God, he was yet tormented with temptations of the flesh. "And lest the greatness of the revelations should puff me up, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of

Satan to buffet me. For which thing I thrice besought the Lord, that it might depart from me; he said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity." To every soul struggling with temptation God speaks these same words of comfort. "What if you are weak and the temptation is strong? My grace is sufficient for you. My power shall be shown forth through your weakness, for what you could never do of your own strength I can and will do for you with my grace."

Many are the lessons we can learn from this text. When we see the great Apostle of the Gentiles engaged in a hard conflict with the demon of impurity, it shows us that God does not spare in this respect even his most chosen servants. On the contrary, by refusing to grant the prayer of St. Paul that he might be delivered from this sting of the flesh, God teaches us that temptation is often a special mark of his favor, even as a general would place his best and bravest soldiers in the thickest of the fight. We are also taught that, no matter how vile the suggestions of the evil one, they cannot soil the heart of him who resists them. If, as soon as the sinfulness of the foul thought or imagination is realized, resistance be at once begun, and kept up until the suggestion is banished, we may be sure we have not yielded, especially if we have had recourse to prayer. From the shield of prayer the arrows of the tempter are sure to glance and fall harmlessly to the ground.

But, on the other hand, these temptations teach us what we are in ourselves, or rather what we should be without the aid of God's grace. St. Paul tells us that God permitted those buffetings of Satan to preserve in him the virtue of humility, "lest the great-

ness of the revelations should puff me up." The evil imaginations arising in our minds show us to what a depth we should sink were God to withdraw his grace from us and leave us to ourselves. We should, therefore, make of such temptations an occasion of humility, acknowledging our own worthlessness, our own weakness, yet glorying, as St. Paul did, in the power of God's grace, which is able to make us strong, and endow us with supernatural merit. And here lies the greatest value and use of temptations—God's power is made perfect in our infirmity. A crown of merit is the reward of victory in the fight. Without the temptation we should not have had the merit of overcoming it. In the hour of trial, then, take courage from these words of God to St. Paul: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for power is made perfect in infirmity."

Quinquagesima Sunday.

EPISTLE. 1 *Cor. xiii.* 1–13. Brethren: If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect shall come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away the things of a child. We see now through a glass in an obscure manner: but then face to face. Now I know in part: but then I shall know even as I am known. And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity.

GOSPEL. *St. Luke xviii.* 31–43. At that time: Jesus took unto him the twelve, and said to them: Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man. For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon: and after they have scourged him, they will put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said. Now it came to pass that when he drew nigh to Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the wayside, begging. And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant. And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying: Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And they that went before, rebuked him, that he should hold his peace. But he cried out much more: Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he was come near, he asked him, saying: What wilt thou that I do to thee? But he said: Lord that I may see. And Jesus said to him: Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he saw, and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

SERMON XLI.

THE QUALITIES OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

WHAT a beautiful description it is, my dear brethren, which St. Paul gives us of the virtue of charity in the Epistle of to-day! If you have never read it or do not remember it, I would advise you to read it

at once; and, indeed, nothing could be better than to commit it to memory.

Let us look just now at a part of it. "Charity," says the Apostle, "is patient, is kind; charity envieth not; dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambitious; seeketh not her own; is not provoked to anger; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

Now, I say this is very beautiful, is it not? And perhaps it seems all the more beautiful because the picture which it gives us is not a very familiar one. I know we are apt to think about as well of ourselves as of almost any one of our acquaintance; but can we say to ourselves, on reading or hearing this description of charity, "That's me; that's just my character to a hair"? No; somehow or other, though we would like to put on the coat, it does not seem to fit.

"Charity is patient, is kind." That is rather out of the way, to begin with, when we think how impatient and cross we are if anything goes wrong, if anybody stands in our way or interferes with us, or even ventures to differ from us in opinion.

"Charity envieth not." Worse yet. Why, some people cannot even see their neighbor have a new dress or hat without at once making up their minds to take the shine out of that conceited thing. And if they hear it said that Miss So-and-So is good-looking they will take some opportunity to remark: "For the life of me, I can't make out what any one sees to admire in her." Probably they might manage to see it if they would make a great effort; but how

can they make the effort when no one seems to have any eye for their own good points, which ought to be so evident to all? And it is not the ladies only who have this weakness. You will hear something like this: "Oh! I consider him to be a much overrated man. I knew him when he was young, and he was nothing above the common. But some people certainly have luck." Or, if you do not hear it out loud, the grumbling is there all the same in the heart. Perhaps some praise has to be given, but it is very sparing; given with great appearance of careful judgment and a desire to keep closely to the truth.

"Charity dealeth not perversely." How is this? Why, you will find Christians who would, as the saying goes, "cut off their nose to spite their face." They will even suffer themselves, if some one else can only be made to suffer too.

But I shall not have time to make all the applications. As I said, you had better read the Epistle, then you can make them for yourselves.

I wish, however, to call your attention before closing to one unpleasant circumstance. Is this charity, which St. Paul so highly praises and so beautifully describes, a sort of fancy and ornamental virtue, which is certainly very commendable, but which we can get along well enough without? Listen to a few other words which come a little before those I have read: "If I should have prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity,

it profiteth me nothing." Notice, he does not say, "I am not much, or these things are not much good, without charity"; no, without it "I am nothing"; a cipher, and a sham. Take this home and meditate on it.

SERMON XLII.

DELAY OF REPENTANCE.

Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap.—GAL. vi. 7, 8.

"NEVER mind, I will repent some day and confess it all to the priest; then it will be as if it never happened." Sometimes, my dear brethren, when men have made up their minds to commit sin, or to go on in a course of sin, they are tempted to say some such words as these; or if they are not fallen so low as to *talk* in this way, yet, if we may form a judgment of their thoughts by their actions, such are the thoughts of not a few. I propose, therefore, to say a few words this morning on the great folly of this way of speaking, thinking, and acting, and to show you what a false notion it rests upon.

I will not stop to point out how uncertain that really is which is assumed as perfectly certain—namely, that an opportunity of going to confession will be granted to every one who acts in this way. A man who sins can never be sure that he will not be cut off in his sin. But I will take it for granted that the opportunity of making a confession is given; more than that, I will take it for granted that he makes a good confession and receives absolution as

he promised himself. In such a case as this is it true that even then all will be just as if the sin had never been committed ?

My dear brethren, to imagine this to be the case would be indeed a very great mistake. In order that you may see this I must recall to your recollection some well-known truths. In the beginning, God, having made man, placed him in a state of great happiness. He was without pain, sickness, anxiety, or death. How is it, then, that man finds himself in his actual condition ? Why is it that man is subjected to so many hardships and miseries, obliged to toil for his daily bread, and, in the end, through anguish and suffering, give up that life which it has cost so much labor to preserve ? Think, my dear brethren, of all the pains of mind and body which you have ever experienced, or which you have seen others experience ; think of all the sufferings of which you have ever read, and ask yourselves the reason for all this vast mass of agony and anguish. That reason is given in one word. Of all the suffering that has ever been and that ever will be, sin is the cause. Directly or indirectly, mediately or immediately, every suffering finds in sin its origin.

Now, I do not say that when we come to particular cases we can always point out precisely how and why *this* suffering is connected with *that* sin. God in his providence permits suffering to attend upon sin for many different reasons. Sometimes it is permitted as a warning not to sin in order that men of sense and understanding, seeing what sin costs, may avoid it. Sometimes suffering in this world is, I am afraid we must say, but a foretaste of eternal suffer-

ing in the next. In some cases sufferings are sent to make us more like our Lord. But—and this is the special point I wish you to notice—suffering is very frequently sent by Almighty God as a punishment in this life for those sins the eternal punishment of which he has forgiven. This brings me back to the special point of this instruction. A man may go to confession, may even make a good confession and receive a good absolution—that is to say, he may receive through the merits of Christ the remission of the eternal punishment due to his sins, and yet things may be very far from being, as he promised himself, just as they were before. On the contrary, he may have a vast amount of punishment to undergo in time in consequence of that sin, which he would not have had if he had not committed that sin. This thought is very suitable for this season. Lent will begin next Wednesday. Its fasting and abstinence are enjoined by the church, among other reasons as a means of satisfying for the temporal punishment due to past sins. But, in order that this fasting and abstinence may be useful for this purpose, those who fast and abstain must be in the state of grace, because all their value as works of satisfaction is due to the indwelling grace of God. In order, then, that your fasting and abstinence may be profitable to your own souls, let me advise you to act like our wise forefathers acted, to come to confession at once in the beginning of Lent, and not to put it off with your Easter duty to the last moment.

SERMON XLIII.

LENTEN OBLIGATIONS.

NEXT Wednesday, my brethren, we enter, as of course you know, on the great and holy season of Lent. On that day, no doubt, as many of you as can will come to the church and receive on your foreheads the ashes which remind us of the penance to which these coming weeks are specially devoted.

The church is generally full on Ash-Wednesday, and one would think, on seeing the crowds pressing forward to receive the ashes, that they were all determined to enter into the spirit of the church, and to keep Lent as it should be kept. Yet how many there are who go through this outward form, and make a great deal of it, and yet neglect all that is signified by it; who give a show indeed of penance, but bring forth none of its fruits! Some, perhaps, of the Ash-Wednesday penitents will not be seen again in the church till they come forward again on Good Friday to kiss the cross.

Yet it is better to come to church, if only on Ash-Wednesday and Good Friday, than not at all; better to do some penance and show some love of God than to neglect these virtues altogether. But how much better still it would be to now thoroughly understand and seriously take to heart what God requires of us, especially in this holy time, and to make it the means, as it may be more than anything else, of our final salvation!

First, then, to thoroughly understand what we are now to do. Everything must be well understood before it can be well done, and the keeping of Lent is

no exception to this general rule. Many people break the rules of Lent because they do not clearly understand them.

Lent, then, my brethren, is not a time to be spent in penance altogether according to one's own devotion. Far from it; the duties to be performed in it are clearly and precisely laid down, and should be attended to very strictly. They are not many; they make no great demand on our time or strength; but the Christian who discharges them properly will make his Lent far better than one would who should neglect them and take any other practices, no matter how hard, in their place. It is better to keep the real rules or laws of Lent faithfully than to hear three Masses every day, and come to all the extra services, and give half one's goods to the poor, and yet neglect our regular duties.

What, then, are these laws? The first is the Easter duty, which should be made before Easter, if possible, though the church indulgently extends the time several weeks after that festival. Make, then, this great duty, far the greatest of all the duties of a Christian, at once; it will be very easy for all of you who have just made the mission to do it now, and the longer you put it off the harder it will be. Make it, then, if possible, the first day it can be made—that is, next Sunday—and get it, if I may say so, off your mind. Do not fancy that, as you have so lately made the mission, the Easter duty is of little consequence. If you had made twenty missions during the past year, and any number of jubilees, the law of the Easter duty would bind you exactly as much as if you had neglected them all. It is like hearing Mass on Sunday; nobody is excused at all

from Mass on Sunday because they have been to it through the week. So this time, the great Sunday of the year, is set apart by the church for the precept of Holy Communion; it must be fulfilled at this time, no matter how often one has received outside of it.

The second and only other real law of Lent is that relating to fasting and abstinence. If you attend carefully to the rules that have been read you will understand this well enough. But do not confuse fasting with abstinence; that is the most common mistake. People often say: "Oh! I have to work hard; I can eat meat if I like." That is a great error, and a very foolish one. Many are excused from fasting on one meal and a collation; few from abstinence on the days appointed. If you want to have a safe conscience in eating meat you should consult a confessor, unless seriously ill.

Attend to these two things, then, and you will make your Lent as a Christian should. But, of course, you will also try to follow, to the best of your ability, the other devotional practices recommended by the church at this time. Come to daily Mass, and to the occasional services, and give alms according to your means. These practices, especially now, are of the greatest spiritual profit, and cannot generally be neglected without spiritual danger. But remember that Easter duty and fasting, with abstinence, are the real laws. Obey these, at any rate, and then, so far as you are able, add the others beside.

First Sunday of Lent.

EPISTLE. 2 *Cor. vi.* 1–10. Brethren: We do exhort you, that you receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith: "In an accepted time have I heard thee; and in the day of salvation have I helped thee." Behold, now is the acceptable time: behold, now is the day of salvation. Giving no offence to any man, that our ministry be not blamed: but in all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in seditions, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, in chastity, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in sweetness, in the Holy Ghost, in charity unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the armor of justice on the right hand and on the left: through honor and dishonor: through infamy and good name: as seducers, and yet speaking truth: as unknown, and yet known: as dying, and behold we live: as chastised, and not killed: as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing: as needy, yet enriching many: as having nothing, and possessing all things.

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. iv.* 1–11. At that time: Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards hungry. And the tempter coming, said to him: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said: It is written, "Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God." Then the devil

took him up into the holy city, and set him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him: If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written: "That he hath given his angels charge over thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest perhaps thou hurt thy foot against a stone." Jesus said to him: It is written again: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Again the devil took him up into a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. And said unto him: All these will I give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me. Then Jesus saith to him: Begone, Satan, for it is written: "The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and him only shalt thou serve." Then the devil left him: and behold, angels came and ministered to him.

SERMON XLIV.

THE MERIT OF FASTING AND ABSTINENCE.

Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth, where the rust and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor the moth doth consume and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also.—GOSPEL OF ASH-WEDNESDAY.

If any one of us, my brethren, should be asked what is the object of this holy season of Lent on which we are now entering, or what is the reason why it has been appointed, the answer would probably be that it is in order that we may do penance for our sins. Penance: punishment inflicted on ourselves in satisfaction for those offences for which we feel we have so imperfectly atoned, and to obtain from God those graces which we so greatly need: this, perhaps,

is the idea uppermost in most people's minds when Lent comes round.

Well, this is no doubt a reason, and a good one, not only for what we have to do in Lent, but for a great deal more that we may do, not only now, but all through the year. Few even of those who lead good lives do penance enough for their sins, even as it is ; almost all go before God with a large account unsettled in this matter. How much worse would it be if there was no Lent, if the church never insisted on our chastising ourselves in any way, and seemed to treat such chastisement as of no consequence ! The very notion of it would drop from our thoughts, as it has indeed long ago from the minds of those who have separated from the church and ceased to possess the true faith.

This is, then, a good reason for Lent ; but there is another which we are not so apt to think of, and which, for this very reason, I would like to emphasize.

This reason is the one suggested by the words of the Gospel of last Wednesday, which you have just heard : "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth ; . . . but lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven. . . . For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also."

Brethren, we should have no trouble at all in getting to heaven if we only really wanted to get there. Of course in one way we do want to get to heaven; that is, we all want to save our souls from the eternal anguish and misery of hell, and we know there is nothing for us but heaven or hell in the end. But I am afraid that many Christians, especially when they have health, strength, and plenty of this world's goods,

have really very little wish to give them up, in order to pass, even could they do so at once, to those joys which the heart of man cannot conceive. No, their treasure is in this world; all their idea of happiness is founded on the pleasures which they have had, are having, or hope to have in it. Their treasure is here, and, as our Lord says, their heart is here too.

I think, then, that this other great reason and object of Lent, of which I have just spoken, is that we may do something to change this state of things; that we may get our hearts off this world, and see our real treasure in heaven, get to know it and love it, and have our hearts there with it. We ought now not merely to stop for a while from worldly pleasures, but to try to cease loving them, and to care for something better. We must love and care for something; let us try now to get the right object for love.

Now, what is this that we should love; what is our treasure in heaven? It is our Father who is in heaven, and who is heaven itself. Brethren, it is not so hard to love God as some people think. We can all try to do a little, at any rate; I mean to love God, not by keeping his commandments, but to love him in the same way as we love those things which are lovely and attractive here. Come to him now, this Lent; that, above all else, is what it was made for; come to church not only to hear a sermon, but to pray, to get near to God, and to bring him into your hearts. Shut the world out of your heart, that he may come in. Ask him to come to you and make his abode with you. Then, when he is really your treasure, he will draw you where he is; you will not have to try to get to heaven; you will go there of your own accord. To die to the world and live to

God, this is the Christian's true life ; and Lent was made to give this life to our souls.

SERMON XLV.

DIFFICULTIES OF FASTING.

BRETHREN, another year has passed, and Lent has come around once more. I have no doubt that a great many of you wish that it had not ; perhaps you would not be so very sorry if the church would have the goodness to do away with this tedious season altogether. Indeed, I imagine that to some people Lent is one of the greatest mysteries of our religion. And even if it is in some general way acknowledged as the proper thing in its due time, it never seems to come in just at the time that would be convenient. If it comes early, it is a very unpleasant interruption to the winter's pleasures and amusements ; if it comes late, why could it not come earlier, so that we could get through and have done with it soon ?

All the grumbling in the world, however, will not alter the fact. We cannot get rid of Lent, and we cannot fix its time to suit us, even if there is any time which would seem suitable. It is possible, indeed, to free ourselves from its burdens ; we may do so either by neglecting its obligations altogether, or by getting somehow or other dispensed from them, without putting anything else in their place. But, after all, if we do this, we shall hardly feel any more comfortable. The best plan is, since Lent is here whether we will or not, to face it boldly and cheerfully, and make the best of it that we can.

And, when we come to look at it, is it such a very terrible infliction? Do we not make rather too much fuss and complaint over what is not really such a very great penance?

Let us look, then, and see what is required of us. The principal thing, of course, is the fasting, as we call it, on one meal. Now, if we actually were reduced to only one meal in the twenty-four hours, I confess that it would be pretty severe; but, you see, in point of fact, we have the collation, at which eight ounces, or half a pound, of solid food is allowed. Now that is as much as many people would take anyway at tea-time. And then you can have a cup of coffee or tea and a small piece of bread in the morning. So, when we come to sift the matter the fact hardly amounts to more than this: that the breakfast is rather a light one. And then, for those who really have hard work, even what is left of the fast goes by the board altogether.

Well, next there is the abstinence from flesh-meat. Some seem to think this dreadful. "Oh!" they will say, "I can't eat fish; it makes me sick." Indeed? Perhaps you are not very hungry, and do not need anything very much. When you are really hungry the fish will not taste so bad. But, then, who, except indeed the fisherman, wants you to eat fish? I do not think there is any law requiring it to be eaten; and if it has such a bad effect on you I would let it alone and try something else. And though fish is so uneatable, perhaps an oyster or two might now and then be worried down.

Now, after the fast and abstinence, what is left? Really nothing at all in the law of the church, at least in black and white. There is, however, a cus-

tom, having about the force of law, prohibiting such parties and theatre-going as would be allowable enough at other times. But have not you had a pretty good chance for these amusements for the last few months? And, if you are in the habit of some indulgence of this kind, a little quiet at home might be agreeable by way of a change.

But perhaps you do not like so much church-going. Well, this is not absolutely required of you. But it certainly is expected: and it will be well to cultivate a taste for it. Ought it to be such a great penance for a Christian to come and spend a little while in the presence of Him with whom he hopes to dwell for ever?

I think, then, that if you will look at Lent in the right light it will not seem so very grievous. It may be even that you will feel that now is a time to be a little generous with our Lord; and, since he does not ask much, you may be disposed to give him a little more than he absolutely demands.

SERMON XLVI.

WASTED OPPORTUNITIES.

Brethren, we exhort you that you receive not the grace of God in vain.

WHAT is this receiving of God's grace in vain, my brethren, against which St. Paul warns us in these words of the Epistle of to-day? It is receiving it and making no use of it; receiving it only to waste it and throw it away.

We are all the time receiving graces from God.

Every day, every hour he is giving them to us. For what is a grace? It is a help, a means to our salvation which comes from him. And these helps he gives us continually, by instructions, by admonitions, by good examples; by the evidences which he puts all around us of the shortness and uncertainty of life, of the instability of earthly riches and happiness, of the peace which virtue gives, of the misery which comes from sin. All these and countless other helps to lead us, almost to force us, into the way of his commandments are lavished on us incessantly. They come more or less to all men, but most of all to us children of his holy Catholic Church, who have the full light of his faith, the full teaching of his law.

But more than all he himself is every day speaking in our hearts, inviting, urging, begging us to turn from mortal sin; or, if we have indeed done that, to rise higher, and serve him more perfectly. If we had listened to all these calls, if we had availed ourselves of all these helps, we should now be far advanced on the way of the saints; we should, like St. Stephen at his martyrdom, see heaven opened before us and our salvation morally secure.

But we have not done that. We have been doing just what the Apostle warns us against; we have been receiving these graces in vain. We have received them, and it has been worse with us than if we had not; for we have received them, many of them at least, only to throw them away and trample them underfoot.

What would you think, my brethren, of a man who, being anxious to reach a distant country, which was his true home, and where were those whom he

loved, and, having no means to do so of himself, should throw away with contempt the sums which from time to time might in charity be offered him to enable him to accomplish his desires, should throw them absolutely away, not even using them to supply his daily wants or to secure some passing pleasure? You would say that he was a madman or a fool; that he had not the gift of reason, which raises man above the brute.

And yet this is what we have been doing; and even more than this. For there have been some, perhaps many, graces which God has given us which would even alone, if rightly used, have answered for all our needs. They would not have been mere contributions to our passage-money for heaven, but would have put us aboard the vessel, and made our reaching port little more than a question of time. But these, like the rest, are gone without being used: they are strewn on the road behind us, and we cannot turn back to pick them up.

Such a great grace is the one which, in spite of our unworthiness, ingratitude, and folly, is now once more offered to us by our Father in heaven, who does not follow the rules by which an earthly benefactor would be guided. This season of Lent on which we are entering is one of the great helps, the great opportunities which he gives us to reach that country where he awaits our coming. One who spends even one Lent as it should be spent will be at its close well established in the way of solid virtue and peace, the way which leads certainly to the kingdom to which we all hope to go.

It is for this that Lent is given us, not merely for a season of penance and suffering, to be got through

with somehow or other as best we can ; it is for this reason also that the church to-day solemnly warns us to use it as it should be used. Listen, then, to her warning voice ; listen out of love and gratitude to God ; listen out of love and holy fear also for yourself ; for it may be the last great grace that will ever be brought to your door.

Second Sunday of Lent.

EPISTLE. 1 *Thess. iv.* 1–7. Brethren: We pray and beseech you in the Lord Jesus, that as you have received from us, how you ought to walk, and to please God, so also you would walk, that you may abound the more. For you know what commandments I have given to you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication. That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor, not in the passion of lust, like the Gentiles, who know not God: and that no man overreach, nor deceive his brother in business: because the Lord is the avenger of all such things, as we have told you before, and have testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto sanctification in Christ Jesus our Lord.

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. xvii.* 1–9. At that time: Jesus taketh unto him Peter and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them. And his face did shine as the sun: and his garments became white as snow. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with him. And Peter answering, said to Jesus: Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou will, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them. And behold, a voice out

of the cloud, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him. And the disciples hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said to them: Arise, and be not afraid. And when they lifted up their eyes they saw no man, but only Jesus. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying: Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of Man be risen from the dead.

SERMON XLVII.

THE JOY OF PENANCE.

He was transfigured before them.—Words from to-day's Gospel.

At first sight, my dear brethren, it seems strange that just as we have entered upon this season of fasting and penance the church should have chosen for to-day's Gospel one of the few accounts which the Evangelists have given of the manifestation on earth of our Lord's glory and majesty. The Gospels, as you are aware, are mainly made up of the record of our Lord's words, actions, and sufferings; they tell us how the Son of God made man went about from place to place doing good, healing the sick, consoling the sorrowful, and in the end undergoing cruel sufferings and an ignominious death. There are but few instances recorded of his being glorified and honored with more than human glory and honor, and when such is the case no long and detailed description is given, the fact is barely mentioned, and the narrative passes on.

But to-day's Gospel forms an exception to this general rule. In it special pains have been taken by the Evangelists to give us in detail a description of the other side, so to speak, of our Lord's life. We are told that our Lord chose, out of the twelve, Peter, James, and John, and led them up into a high mountain, and was transfigured before them : so that his face did shine as the sun, and even his garments became shining and exceeding white as snow, "so as no fuller upon earth can make white." And then there appeared to them Elias with Moses talking with Jesus. And so astonished and impressed was Peter that he exclaimed : "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias."

Now, why has the church, by selecting the account of the Transfiguration at this season, turned our thoughts to what seems so inappropriate a subject? It would seem that it would have been better to have chosen those parts of the Gospel which treat of sin, of the judgment to come, of the punishments which await the impenitent sinner. Well, I do not know that I can tell you all the reasons why the church has made this choice, but I think I can give you one reason, and that is, that the church wished to encourage us and to animate us at this season by placing before us the glory which is in store for those who do penance and suffer here.

In this life there is nothing so familiar to most of us as suffering in some form or other. Most of us are obliged by our circumstances to pass our days in exhausting toil and labor. Disease and anxiety and want and disappointment are to be met with on all

sides, and there are but few who are free from all these evils. And to all—even to those who are the most favored in this life—there is an hour coming which nothing can avert—the hour of death. This, as every one may see, is the present state of things. Moreover, our Lord, so far from encouraging us to expect freedom from suffering, insists continually upon its necessity. "Deny yourselves," "take up your cross daily," "blessed are the mourners," such are the words our Lord addresses to his disciples. And the church, that this teaching of our Lord may not be a mere speculation, brings it down into every-day practical life by commanding us at this season to fast and abstain. From all this the necessity of suffering is evident.

But however true this is, suffering is not an end in itself; it is only a means to an end; it is but a road to everlasting joy and glory. God permits and commands sufferings in order that he may give to those who endure their sufferings well an abundant reward. As St. Paul says: "That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." And it is in order that we may ever remember this that the church calls upon us to consider the manifestation of the glory of our Lord and Master, to whom we must be made conformable in all things—in suffering in this life, in glory in the next.

SERMON XLVIII.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION NOT IMPOSSIBLE.

This is the will of God, your sanctification.—EPISTLE OF THE DAY.

WHAT, my dear brethren, is the will or intention of Almighty God and of the Catholic Church, which is directed by his Holy Spirit, in establishing for us this fast of Lent, and commanding us to observe it? What is the end which he meant that every Christian should attain by keeping it, and which makes the opportunity now offered to us such a great grace as we were warned last week that it is? The words of St. Paul to-day answer these questions for us. "The will of God," he says, his intention for us at all times indeed, but specially now, "is our sanctification."

But what is our sanctification? It is the making us saints. That, then, is what Lent ought to do for us. It ought to make us saints; God and his church mean that it should.

"Well," perhaps you may say, "if that is the end for which Lent is appointed, it seems to me that the end is seldom attained. For my part, I am afraid I shall never be a saint; saints are few and far between. It will take more than one Lent to make a saint out of such a sinner as I am."

If, then, you say this, I must confess that there is a good deal of truth in it. We must all feel and acknowledge that. Any one who could feel sure now that when Easter comes he will be fit to be canonized must either be very proud and presumptuous, and far from real sanctity, or have some special re-

velation from God, to which, I think, none of us will pretend.

But for all that it is true that Lent ought to sanctify us; it ought to make us saints, only we need not take the word in quite so high a sense. Though we may hope for the greatest possible gifts now, we cannot confidently expect them. There is, however, a sanctification that we ought to expect from this Lent, and what is it?

It is what I fear many of you, even though tolerably good Christians, do not expect. What do I mean by a tolerably good Christian? I mean, of course, one who expects to make his Easter duty. One who does not expect and mean to do that can hardly be called a tolerably good Christian; it would be more nearly right to call him an intolerably bad one. Well, then, you who are good Christians expect to make your Easter duty; so far, so good. But it is not far enough. For what is it that is meant, perhaps, by that? Is it not merely to make up your mind to confess your sins and to keep for a few days as you ought to be, and then be pretty much as you were before? Has not that been the experience of the past Easter duties of not a few of you, my brethren; and may not the same be said of the missions you have attended, and the other great graces you have received from time to time in your life? You came up to the surface, as a fish jumps out of the water for a moment, and then down you went again.

But that is not enough. That is not sanctification, and it is not the will or intention of God. What you ought to expect is much more than that. What, then, is it? It is simply this: that when you

have made your Easter duty you are going to stay all your life where it will put you. It is that the habits of mortal sin which you may then have to confess will be gone for good; that those impure thoughts, words, and actions will have stopped for ever; that the shameful drunkenness, and all the sins which came from it, will be things only of the past; that you will never again wilfully neglect Holy Mass; that in every way you will really live as you ought, all the time in the state of grace, in peace with God and men, and in readiness to die at any time, even without the sacraments, if such should be God's will; that, in short, you will be truly converted to him once for all.

That is the sanctification which past Lents have not brought you, but which this one should. Do not, I beg you, think it is impossible, for it is not only possible but easy. Do not make your Easter duty the highest point and the end of your Christian life; it should be only the beginning of it. What a consolation it will be to you, if in your future life you can look back on this Lent and say, "That was the time when I really began to be a good Christian; since then I have not had much on my conscience; I have kept in the state of grace. I made really good and strong resolutions then, and I have been faithful to them ever since."

There are those now, plenty of them, who can say this of some past Lent. Let it be now your turn to say it of this one. It is not a matter of luck and chance; if you will, this grace of a lasting conversion from sin is now offered to each and every one of you. It is yours to a certainty, if you will take the trouble to secure it; for it is the will of God.

SERMON XLIX.

THE DIVINE PRESENCE IN OUR CHURCHES.

Lord, it is good for us to be here.—St. Matt. xvii. 4.

The Gospel of to-day tells us of the wonderful Transfiguration of our Lord upon the mountain in the sight of his Apostles Peter, James, and John. "His face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as snow." And Peter, wrapt in wonder, yet conscious of the privilege of being present at such a time, exclaimed: "Lord, it is good for us to be here." Jesus has withdrawn his visible presence from us. We cannot, like St. Peter and St. John, behold him with our bodily eyes, nor with our ears can we hear him speaking the words of life. It is better for us that it should be so. In our present sinful and imperfect state we could not bear the splendors of his glorified humanity. When from out the bright cloud which overshadowed him the disciples heard the voice of God proclaiming, "This is my beloved Son," "they fell upon their faces, and were very much afraid." The sight of all this glory, and the knowledge that they were in the presence of Almighty God himself, filled them with fear. So, too, would it be with us now if Jesus were to show himself to us as he now is in heaven. At the sight of his majesty and glory we, too, should fall upon our faces with fear and trembling.

Now, our dear Lord, knowing this weakness of ours, does not withdraw his presence from us, for he has promised to be with us, even till the end

of the world ; but he hides his glory from us under the humble appearance of bread and wine. Beneath these outward forms he remains continually in our churches, there in the tabernacle, by day and night, claiming our adoration and our love. In Holy Mass he is daily raised aloft by the hands of the priest, offering himself to God the Father for the sins of the world. In the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament he is lifted up to bless his faithful ones. And God still speaks to us by the voice and teaching of the church as truly as he spoke to the disciples upon the holy mountain, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased : hear ye him." We can still see our Lord, yet only through the cloud which overshadows him—that is, by the eyes of faith. Yet he is none the less really present in the tabernacle upon the altar than he was upon Mount Thabor on the day of his Transfiguration.

When, therefore, we come into his sacred presence, when we enter the church and see the little lamp burning before the altar to tell us that he is there, our sentiments should be those of St. Peter at the Transfiguration : "Lord, it is good for us to be here." It is good for us to often visit him in the Blessed Sacrament : it is good for us to often receive his Benediction ; it is good for us, nay, necessary for us, to assist at Holy Mass when the church bids us do so; above all it is good for us, above all it is necessary for us, to receive him in Holy Communion, and especially now at this time for the fulfilment of the Easter duty. Jesus is present in the Blessed Sacrament only for our own good, for the good of our souls. When, therefore, we see this great good-

ness of our Lord towards us, how can we be so heedless of our own good as to turn away from him?

And when you come before the Blessed Sacrament, remember that you are in God's presence. Do not forget to bend your knee in adoration. Do not take advantage of his mercy in hiding his glory from you by forgetting that he is really here, by spending the whole time of Mass with roving eyes and thoughts. Fix your attention upon the altar where he is, and offer him the best homage that your heart can give. It will be good for you to be here, if you have the same sentiments at Mass which the disciples had at the Transfiguration. You should be filled with a holy fear lest your idle thoughts at this holy time should one day be reckoned against you. For now he veils himself from you in mercy and love, but one day he will appear to you in far more dazzling brightness than he ever manifested on earth. Oh! then, despise not his presence here, that when at last you stand before him he may judge you worthy to enjoy his presence for ever.

Third Sunday of Lent.

EPISTLE. *Eph.* v. 1–9. Brethren : Be ye followers of God, as most dear children. And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness. But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints: nor obscenity, nor foolish talking, nor scurrility, which is to no purpose : but rather giving of thanks. For know ye this, and understand that no fornicator, nor unclean, nor covetous person which is a serving of idols hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words. For because of these things cometh the anger of God upon the children of unbelief. Be ye not therefore partakers with them. For you were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord. Walk ye as children of the light : for the fruit of the light is in all goodness, and justice, and truth.

GOSPEL. *St. Luke* xi. 14–28. At that time : Jesus was casting out a devil, and the same was dumb ; and when he had cast out the devil, the dumb spoke ; and the multitude admired : but some of them said : He casteth out devils in Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. And others tempting, asked of him a sign from heaven. But he, seeing their thoughts, said to them : Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation, and a house upon a house shall fall. And if Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand ? because you say, that

in Beelzebub I cast out devils. Now if I cast out devils in Beelzebub, in whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I, in the finger of God, cast out devils, doubtless the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things which he possesseth are in peace. But if a stronger than he come upon him and overcome him, he will take away all his armor wherein he trusted, and will distribute his spoils. He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest: and not finding, he saith: I will return into my house whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in they dwell there. And the last state of that man becometh worse than the first. And it came to pass, as he spoke these things, a certain woman from the crowd lifting up her voice, said to him: Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps that gave thee suck. But he said: Yea, rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.

SERMON L.

IMMODEST LANGUAGE.

How pertinent to our own times are the words of St. Paul in the Epistle of to-day, addressed nineteen centuries ago to the Christians of Ephesus: "But all uncleanness, let it not be so much as named among you, as becometh saints. . . . For know ye this and understand that no unclean person hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

There is no vice, my brethren, more common among men at the present day in all classes of society, from the professional man to the day-laborer, among the rich and the poor, the old and the young, than that of obscene or immodest conversation.

Among the better educated this poison of impurity is clothed in language which serves to veil its disgusting nudity, and thus the more securely to insinuate itself and to deceive the unwary: while among the less educated it is oftener expressed in words that reveal its horrid filthiness and shock common decency.

Listen to the conversation of almost any chance gathering of young men, and you will soon hear the double-meaning joke, the attempt of some one to be witty, which serves as much to expose the shallowness of his pate as the corruption and rottenness of his miserable heart.

Holy Scripture says that "out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh." How true this is! But if one were to use this criterion in judging the thoughts that fill the hearts of many amongst us, how debased and pitiable must be their condition!

And how shocking it is, my dear brethren, to meet a young man whose dress and manner at first give evidence of respectability and good breeding, but who, when an immodest allusion is made or an impure joke uttered, is the first to shout with laughter! Such a one is well described by our Blessed Lord as "a whited sepulchre, full of dead men's bones."

And yet these whited sepulchres are not very rare in the community. You meet them in every walk of life—in the counting-room and in the factory, at the "respectable" club-room as well as in the grog-

shop, and alas! must we say it, among Catholics as well as among non-Catholics.

Yes, among Catholics, who have been elevated to a supernatural state through the merits and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ; whose hearts have been sealed by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and on whose tongue the Body and Blood of our Lord has often been placed—even these have dared to cherish in their hearts and express with their tongues thoughts and sentiments that would shock the moral sense even of the unregenerate.

Are they laboring under the incredible and awful delusion that they commit no great sin when they entertain or give expression to such thoughts? Do they think that they escape mortal sin when their impurity is expressed in the form of a joke or a pun, or when they by a laugh countenance and encourage the like impurity in others? Ah! my dear brethren, it is to be feared that too many consciences have been lulled to sleep by this cunning device of the devil.

The first introduction to sin for many a one has been the listening with pleasure to the double-meaning word uttered, perhaps, by a companion, or while in the company of others. He was then put on trial not by the devil alone, but by the one also who uttered it. But the blush of modesty which rose instinctively to his cheek from a pure heart was by an effort suppressed through human respect, and the voice of conscience, that told him to administer a rebuke to the minister of Satan or abandon his company at once, was hushed into silence, and the demon of impurity from that moment took possession.

Take warning, then, my dear brethren, from the

words of St. Paul, and never countenance by a laugh or in any other way any offence against holy purity, in whatsoever form it may be expressed; "for know ye that no unclean person hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

SERMON LI.

HONORARY CHURCH-MEMBERS.

He who is not with me is against me.—LUKE xi. 23.

SOCIETIES in our day, brethren, have become a great moral force, the very best means of promoting and spreading any great cause. Men recognize this fact, and so combine together, that by unity of purpose they may better advance the principles they desire to support. Many of these societies are made up of two distinct classes—the active members, who are the bone and sinew, the life of the institution, and the honorary members, who take no personal interest in the management or working of the society, but who, nevertheless, are good enough, or interested enough, to advance the cause they honor by the support of their name.

You and I, brethren, belong to a society, the Catholic Church, which embraces the whole world. We have in view one great object—the salvation of souls, the spread of the kingdom of Jesus Christ among men. But this society of ours, a real, living, organic institution, differs from most others in this: that it does not need the support of *honorary* members; neither will it approve their existence in its bosom.

No, the church would have all her members living, active, earnest supporters of her principles, and from them all she requires a pledge that they will keep her laws, advance her ends, and fight her battles for the kingdom she was established to uphold. She will welcome no mere spectators to her ranks, and as for neutral ground, she recognizes none; for those who are not with her are against her.

And yet there are many who call themselves Christians, *would-be honorary* members of the Catholic Church, who do not even realize what the word Christian means; who seem to forget that to be a Christian imposes the obligation of being at war with all that is anti-Christian. An honorary membership for such Christians is very convenient; a membership that would allow them to be on good terms with Christ and Satan. The fasting and praying, the vigils and good works, the real brunt of the battle they would leave to the active members, while they would look on with an encouraging smile of approval.

Ah! brethren, learn this lesson once for all and well: between Christ and the world there can be no compromise. He who is not with me is against me. There is no neutral ground, for the moment we desert the Christian rank and file we give the hand of fellowship to the enemy. We cannot serve two masters well, and in the Catholic Church there is no membership worthy the name that is not an active, complete membership. The drones of the hive may flourish and thrive for a time, but let them remember they run the awful risk of final destruction.

The question I would have you ask yourselves today, and meditate upon during this holy season, is this: Are you active, living members of the church,

that mystical body of which Jesus Christ is the head and the Holy Ghost the life-giving principle, or are you simply *would-be honorary* members? Have you at heart the interests of God's holy church: are her sorrows, her wants, her trials yours? Are the sacraments she offers you the source and support of your life? If so, you have reason to thank God.

Or are you standing afar off ready to give an approving nod when the world smiles, or slink off like a coward when the world frowns? Are the laws of the church irksome to you and so avoided? If this be the case, you are nothing but dead limbs, and liable to be cut off without a moment's warning from the living body, for dead members are against, not with, the parent stem.

Would-be honorary members of the Catholic Church, beware of the error of trying to give one hand to God and the other to the devil; beware of the fallacy of thinking that because you are outwardly-connected with the church you cannot be lost—that hell was never intended for Catholics; that, somehow or other, you will come out all right in the end. That is what Judas thought when with his sin-stained lips he kissed his Lord whom he had so lately sold to the enemy.

Have you still the faith, then beware lest your want of charity may bring on a want of faith. Have you still a conscience, beware lest your frequent attempts to stifle it may extinguish it altogether. If there be a spark of it left I beg of you stir it up. Be in earnest, and at least let not this Lent pass without a good confession and communion, the only condition on which you can became active members of God's holy church. Put your heart in the work and you will

be happier for it here and certainly happier hereafter.

SERMON LII.

HALF-HEARTED CHRISTIANS.

He that is not with me is against me.—GOSPEL OF THE DAY.

THESE words, my dear brethren, like many others spoken by our Blessed Lord, may be interpreted in various ways. They may be understood to mean that he who is not with Christ, by being united to his true flock, who does not belong to the one church which he has founded, is injuring the cause of Christ, is persecuting and hampering his church in its warfare against its enemies; or, in other words, that Protestants and heretics in general, zealous Christians though they may seem to be, are really hurting Christianity about as much as they help it, if not more. And it is plain enough to us that this is true. If there had never been any heresies and schisms in the church, we cannot doubt that there would have been now few nations not Christian.

But this, true though it may be, seems to have little practical bearing for us. We are not heretics or schismatics, and I hope that we have no inclination to be so. Still we must remember that bad Catholics do about as much harm to the work of Christ and his church in the world as heretics. In fact, there would never have been any heretics had there not been bad Catholics to begin with.

But, after all, it does not seem that our Lord is speaking so much of heretics, or of bad Catholics,

when he says: "He that is not with me is against me." For he goes on to tell us that "when the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest; and not finding, he saith, I will return to my house whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then he goeth, and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in they dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."

The meaning of this is plain enough. It is that a man cannot give up a bad life, and then remain betwixt and between, neither bad nor good. His soul cannot stay empty, swept, and garnished. He must keep the love of God in it; he must have good thoughts and do good works, or the devil will come back, take possession of the empty soul, and make it worse than it was before.

So this gives a new sense to the words, "He that is not with me is against me." He that is not a real good Christian, trying to live for the glory of God, and to do the work for which God has put him in the world, will be a bad one before long, if he is not already. We cannot lie low and shirk the duties which belong to us as Christians and as Catholics. We must be God's servants, and live in such a way as to be known as such, or we shall begin again to serve his enemy.

Let us take an instance, and you will see well enough what I mean. A young man or woman has been going with bad company, who, though perhaps they call themselves Catholics, are a disgrace to the name, and has joined with them in all their vile conversations and sinful actions. Now, too many of

those who have been living in this way seem to think that after their confession and communion they can go back to this company and still avoid remark; that nobody will have occasion to say that they are pious, or notice any change in their life; that they can keep all right in God's sight, and also in that of their bad companions; that they can avoid doing any harm, and still do no good.

Let such remember these words: "He that is not with me is against me." If you want to stay in the grace of God, you must hate sin, and love virtue; and if you really do this your life and conversation will show that such is the case. You must be a friend of Christ and an enemy of the devil and of all his works, and not only be willing but proud to be known as such; if you will not do this our Lord will not have you or keep you. Choose, then, which side you will take; do not fancy that you can take neither. If you try to steer a middle course, and live an empty and unprofitable life, neither one thing nor the other, you will soon slip back just where you were before.

Fourth Sunday of Lent.

EPISTLE. *Gal. iv.* 22–31. Brethren: It is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bond-woman, and the other by a free-woman: but he that was by the bond-woman was born according to the flesh: but he by the free-woman was by the promise. Which things are said by an allegory: for these are the two testaments: the one indeed on Mount Sina which bringeth forth unto bondage, which is Agar: for Sina is a mountain in Arabia, which hath an affinity to that which now is Jerusalem, and is in bondage with her children. But that Jerusalem which is above, is free: which is our mother. For it is written: "Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not: break forth and cry out, thou that travailest not; for many are the children of the desolate, more than of her that hath a husband"; now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he, that was born according to the flesh, persecuted him that was according to the spirit: so also now. But what saith the Scripture? "Cast out the bond-woman and her son: for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman." Therefore, brethren, we are not the children of the bond-woman, but of the free: by the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free.

GOSPEL. *St. John vi.* 1–15. At that time: Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is that of Tiberias: and a great multitude followed him, because they saw the miracles which he did on them that were infirm. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. Now the pasch,

the festival day of the Jews, was near at hand. When Jesus therefore had lifted up his eyes, and seen that a very great multitude cometh to him, he said to Philip: Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? And this he said to try him, for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him: Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith to him: There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves, and two fishes; but what are these among so many? Then Jesus said: Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves: and when he had given thanks he distributed to them that were sat down. In like manner also of the fishes as much as they would. And when they were filled, he said to his disciples: Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost. So they gathered up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above to them that had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen what a miracle Jesus had done, said: This is the prophet indeed that is to come into the world. When Jesus, therefore, perceived that they would come and take him by force and make him king, he fled again into the mountain himself alone.

SERMON LIII.

THE HAPPINESS OF TRUE PENANCE.

Rejoice Jerusalem.—INTROIT OF THE MASS FOR THE DAY.

THIS is called "Lætare, or rejoicing Sunday." It may surprise you, dear brethren, to be told

that this is a day of rejoicing; you will be amazed, no doubt, that, in the midst of the rigorous Lenten fast, when men should bewail their sins and do penance for them, and sounds of mirth and joy are hushed, the church should bid us rejoice. Yet thus she does to-day. In mid-Lent even she would have her children rejoice, would have them forget for the moment penance and turn their hearts to thoughts of gladness, that, by so doing, she may teach them that the rigors of this season, the self-denial and curbing of the flesh she imposes on us, is undergone that we may realize more fully the spirit of her teaching—that we may, in truth, preserve, or get back if we have lost it, that interior joy, that spiritual jubilation which is the portion of every one who serves Christ as he should be served.

Our religion is one of joy, because we are Christ's and he is ours; and what more can we ask, or what greater can be bestowed upon us, than the having of Christ; Christ, at once perfect man and true God; Christ, whose life is the model of our lives, whose grace is the source of all joy; Christ, to have whom is to have a brother, and, at the same time, the eternal God; the God by whose word were made all things that are, who knows no limit to his power, who has in himself all perfections that man can desire or conceive of; a brother—a man like ourselves, with a human heart like our own, with affections like those of other men; a brother burning with tender love for us, knowing our weakness, knowing our wants and ready to succor us; a man who was himself tempted, who has himself suffered the miseries of this life, who, in a word, was made like to us in all save sin. This is whom we have when we have

Christ, and should we not rejoice at having such a one?

We should and do rejoice; our hearts are always full of gladness when we are in God's grace, and Christ is ours and we are his; and this is what the church wishes for all her children—the friendship and the love of God. She ever has Christ herself, and so is never sad; though she may mourn with him suffering, still there is joy behind all her sorrow.

If she puts on sombre garments, if she calls man to penance, if she fasts and covers her head with ashes, she is still glad in the depths of her heart. She is calling you and me to share the gladness, to get it back if we have lost it by mortal sin; she is bidding you and me to keep that gladness by chastising our bodies; she is warning us that we may lose God's grace, as, alas! too many before us have lost it, unless we are vigilant.

Dear brethren, listen to the church's voice to-day; come, all of you, come and share her joy. If you are not in God's grace do not let another day go by without making your peace with God. Oh! how much you are losing, and for what? For some trifling satisfaction which cannot bring true happiness; some mean gratification of your lower nature; for sin you are letting slip by the offer of God's friendship and the joy of a good conscience. Do you want to die as you are living? If you do not, repent of your sins to-day; before you leave this church promise God that you will sin no more; that you will be in fact what you are in name—a Christian.

SERMON LIV.

LIBERTY OF SPIRIT.

By the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free.

THESE, my dear brethren, are the concluding words of the Epistle read at Mass to-day. They ought to be of unusual interest to us, for they speak of a matter which we all care very much about; which some care so much about that they are willing to fight for it, and to die for its sake.

If you have listened to these words of St. Paul, which I have just read, you know what this is of which I speak, and for which we all care so much. It is freedom or, as we often call it, liberty. Many, as I just said, will even die, if need be, rather than abandon it; and indeed thousands, nay millions, have actually done so. Man feels that he must have it. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness he claims as his right.

Especially do people nowadays ask for liberty, and insist on having it. The child is no sooner out of his mother's arms than he wants and tries in all things to have his own way. Obedience is a lesson that he seldom willingly learns. He thinks that when he is a man he can do as he pleases; and he does not see why he should not even now. Sometimes he succeeds in having his own way, in spite of his parents; he runs away from school and, when a little older, from church; he passes his life among such companions as he chooses, who help him to get the liberty which they think they have themselves got, by defying all the laws of God and of man.

But is this really liberty which these foolish children, and young men and women more foolish than children, think they have got by trampling on all law? No; a thousand times no! It is to true liberty only as the shadow to the substance, as they find to their cost before they have travelled very far on this road. They have but escaped from a light and easy yoke to take on their necks one far heavier and more grievous, and which becomes more and more so every day. They have left the service of the kind and good Master to whom they belonged and entered into that of a hard and cruel tyrant instead. He has filled them with base and beastly passions, and made them slaves to these passions. They are given over, body and soul, to impurity, gluttony, or drunkenness, or it may be to a mean and miserable greed for money. At last, perhaps, they try to turn back and shake themselves free from these accursed lusts, which have fastened on them, and are draining the very life-blood from their souls; but it seems that they cannot do so. They set out to do as they pleased, and how has it ended? In their being bound, hand and foot, in the slavery of sin.

But what was their mistake? Were they altogether wrong in wishing for liberty? Is the desire for freedom, which is implanted in us, all a delusion? Are we never to do as we desire, but always to have a restraint and a yoke upon us?

No, my brethren, the idea of liberty is not a mistake. We are right in wishing for liberty, hoping for it, and trying to secure it in the right way. But the mistake these foolish people of whom I have spoken make is in going the wrong way in

the search for it: in looking for it in the wrong place.

Where, then, is liberty to be found? I will tell you; and you may be surprised at what I say, for it does not sound as if it could be true; but it is true, nevertheless. True liberty, then, is in the service of God. Those who serve God best are the freest men on earth.

But how can this be? I answer, It can and must be very easily and very plainly. For those who serve God best of all—that is, the saints in heaven—always do just what they like, and enjoy doing it most perfectly. They have got rid of all the hindrances that, more or less, prevent every one here below from doing what he wishes.

And, of course, those who try to walk in the path of the saints here on earth also have much of this freedom. The more they learn to do God's will the more they love it; and so they are always doing more and more what they like, and more and more easily all the time; and that is just what liberty is: to do what you like, and to do it without pain or difficulty.

The servants of God, then, have their liberty, because they have got free from sin, which is the only obstacle to it. And this freedom from sin is the gift of Christ, it is the fruit of his Passion; it is, then, the liberty which he has given us. It is ours if we wish it. Try, then, my dear brethren, in this holy season of Lent, when his graces are so abundantly poured out, to gain that freedom which they will surely give us, that "freedom wherewith Christ has made us free."

SERMON LV.

THE LUST OF THE EYES.

Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For the things that are done by them in secret, it is a shame even to speak of.—Ephes. v. 11, 12.

Some weeks ago, my dear brethren, we had occasion to speak of the horrible and filthy vice of impurity, which is every day dragging into hell thousands of souls with the mark of the cross of Christ on them, and washed in vain with his Precious Blood. As was said then, many Christians do not seem to realize the enormity of sins against the Sixth Commandment—at least those of thought and of the tongue; to which may be added those coming from the use of the other senses, especially that of sight.

An immodest imagination or desire, wilfully entertained or enjoyed, is a mortal sin, and gives the soul so harboring it instantly into the power of the devil. Let us hope that no one having the Catholic faith will doubt this, or think it too strict a doctrine; for it is the unanimous consent of all the teaching authority in the church from the beginning, amply supported also by Holy Scripture. What shall we say, then, of wilful and deliberate gazing at immodest pictures, or of reading matter directly calculated to inflame impure passions, and certain to have its effect?

Now, I hardly need to say that a city like this is full of these temptations coming through the eyes into the heart. The good and pure instinctively avoid them, and scarcely know that they exist: accustomed to watch the slightest movements of their

souls to evil, and instantly to repress them, they shrink with horror from those filthy words and pictures on which others eagerly gaze. They know that, as the Apostle says, it is a shame to speak of these things, a greater shame to write or to read of them, a greater shame yet to expose them to sight, to incite temptation by them, and thus to destroy the souls for which Christ died.

I say that the good and pure are not likely to be caught in this net of Satan; by this I mean those who have been warned of the evil, who understand its danger, and from well-formed habits of virtue set themselves resolutely against it. But there are others who are good and pure—in their baptismal innocence, perhaps; young, at any rate, and unused to sin, at least of this kind—who are not forewarned and forearmed like those of maturer years, who, seeing bad pictures in papers sold even at stores otherwise of good repute, and kept, perhaps, by Catholics, do not fully understand how bad they are, and are led to look at them with pleasure, to learn evil which they knew not of, and thus to contract habits of sin which they will never overcome.

Now, what does our Lord say of those who thus put temptation in the way of the young and innocent? You all know his words: "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones who believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea." Strong words these, but they are those of the Divine Wisdom, and beyond correction by human lips. Yes, it is better to die, better even to die in the state of sin, than to add such a sin as this to our number.

Let us beware, then, not in any way, however indirect, to give sanction or encouragement to this work of the devil in our midst. "Have no fellowship with these works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Do not buy or even take up for a moment the indecent papers or books now unfortunately so common among us; still more, do not sell them; do not allow them to be in the house; do not suffer your children to look at or read them; do not frequent places where they are to be had. Set your faces resolutely, for the honor of God and the Catholic name, as well as for your own souls' sake, against this plague of immodest literature, which has assumed such fearful proportions and become so bold and unblushing in these days in which we live. Think nothing to be light or of little moment in this matter; mortal sin is much easier in it than you may believe.

Passion Sunday.

EPISTLE. *Heb. ix.* 11–15. Brethren: Christ, being come a high-priest of the good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation: neither by the blood of goats, nor of calves, but by his own blood, entered once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of a heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God? And therefore he is the mediator of the new testament: that by means of his death, for the redemption of those transgressions, which were under the former testament, they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance in Christ Jesus our Lord.

GOSPEL. *St. John viii.* 46–59. At that time: Jesus said to the multitude of the Jews: Which of you shall convince me of sin? If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe me? He that is of God, heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God. The Jews, therefore, answered and said to him: Do we not say well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered: I have not a devil: but I honor my Father, and you have dishonored me. But I seek not my own glory; there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Amen, amen, I say to you: if any man keep my word, he shall not see death for ever. The

Jews therefore said: Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest: If any man keep my word, he shall not taste death for ever. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Whom dost thou make thyself? Jesus answered: If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father that glorifieth me, of whom you say that he is your God. And you have not known him, but I know him. And if I shall say that I know him not, I shall be like to you, a liar. But I do know him, and do keep his word. Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day: he saw it, and was glad. The Jews therefore said to him: Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am. They took up stones therefore to cast at him. But Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.

SERMON LVI.

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. —1 Ep. St. John i. 7.

We all know, my dear brethren, that when a man is born into the world he is born *unclean* before God. He is then *so* unclean that he is not fit to associate with the sons of God and heirs of the kingdom of heaven. He is then *so* unclean that he can never be anything but an outcast from God until he is made clean.

Is there any way in which he can be made clean? Yes, for when he is baptized he is made a new creature; he is cleansed from the stain of original sin,

made a child of God and heir of the kingdom of heaven. He is then so pure and holy that if he die immediately he will go, to a certainty, straight to heaven. For baptism applies the Blood of Christ to his soul, and he is become truly clean. But suppose he does not die immediately after baptism, how is it with him then? If he keep his baptismal innocence, so far as never to commit a mortal sin, he still has a right to go to heaven. He can then demand of God permission to enter heaven.

Can he, however, demand this permission to enter heaven immediately after his death if he has committed only venial sin? That depends entirely upon his contrition at the moment of death. If he is not so sorry for all his sins that his contrition is perfect, then he can't enter heaven immediately, but must go to purgatory to be made perfectly pure, so that he can be taken into heaven.

I have said that baptism applies the Blood of Christ to the soul and makes man pure and innocent. Now, baptism is a sacrament. It is the first one and is necessary to salvation. Without it no man can enter heaven, nor even purgatory, for the purgatorial state is the first and lowest state of blessed and holy souls who must go to heaven in the end. But the blood of Christ is applied to the soul of man in other ways, although baptism must come in in the first place.

In what other ways is the Blood of Christ applied:

First, by the Sacrifice of the Mass. For by the Mass we repair our sins, get grace to keep from sin, and make our purgatory shorter in consequence. He who hears Mass daily makes the best prayer that a man can make, and he is more certain to have his prayer answered. He also helps the living and the

dead, and brings down upon himself and his own special graces from God.

Secondly, the Blood of Christ is applied to our souls by the Sacrament of Penance. Men defile their souls by sin, by *mortal* sin after baptism. He who receives the Sacrament of Penance worthily—that is, with true sorrow for all mortal sin, with a firm determination to lead a good life and repair the wrong he has done—that man receives again the grace of God that restores his soul to eternal life.

Thirdly, in Holy Communion we receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in a hidden manner, but in deed and in truth. The consecrated Host is the eternal and ever-living God himself. You know, my dear brethren, the strength of this divine food. How it gives new energy to the soul, destroys the power of concupiscence, banishes, or at least weakens, temptation, always giving us the grace to hold our own against the world, the flesh, and the devil. *And there are Catholics who refuse to make this Communion once a year!*

But there is one thing that ought to be said here. A Catholic ought never to consider as useless, or as almost useless, any one of the sacraments. This too many do as regards confession. They underrate it. They think, therefore, it is no good unless they receive Communion every time they go to confession. Now this is a grave error. One is *not* obliged to go to Communion every time he goes to confession. Those who cannot go to Mass nor Communion, on account of their business or employment or work keeping them away, can at least go to confession very often during the year. All such an one has to do is to prepare himself carefully, step into the rec-

tor's house, make his confession, and go on to work again. If he but make an arrangement with some one of the priests he can always be heard at once. Frequent confession is a wonderful help to a good life and a happy death.

SERMON LVII.

CHRIST'S PASSION.

Which of you shall convince me of sin?—JOHN viii. 46.

TO-DAY, dear friends, is Passion Sunday, and our long Lenten pilgrimage is nearing its end. Heretofore our thoughts have been on ourselves, our own shortcomings, our own sins. Now we stand, as it were, on the hill overlooking the Holy City, and see before us, as a map unrolled, the scene of our Redeemer's agony: Bethany, the olive-garden of Gethsemani, and, further on, the barren mount of Calvary, with its three crosses standing forth, black and cruel, against the fair blue sky.

Now our thoughts turn from ourselves to our Lord. We have seen what the effect of sin has been on us. Now we look and see, and our shame should deepen as we see, what sorrow and tears and agony it has brought on the eternal Son of God.

To-day the cross is veiled, the pictures are shrouded in mourning, the "Gloria" ceases to be sung. So our sins covered our dying Lord as with a garment, and sorrow chokes the voice of holy church, fills her heart to overflowing, and stills all her songs of praise.

What is this veil which obscures the cross of Jesus

Christ and makes his Passion of no effect? O dear brethren! is it not our sins? What platted the crown of thorns, and drove those sharp spikes deep into his sacred head? Our selfish pride. What sent those nails through his hands and feet, fixing them to the tree of shame? Our wicked deeds and our wanderings from the path of duty. What parched his tongue with such burning thirst? Our shameless indulgence in drink. What pointed the spear of the impious Roman soldier, and hurled it deep into the Sacred Heart, whence issued the red torrent of the Precious Blood? Our inordinate appetites and sinful lusts. As often as we sin we crucify our dearest Lord afresh.

"Which of you shall convince me of sin?" What more could I have done for my vineyard which I have not done? I came down from heaven; took upon myself the form of a servant, the likeness of sinful flesh; set you a perfect example how you should walk; was led as a lamb to the slaughter; was scourged, spit upon, mangled, crucified; what could I have done more? Which of you shall convince me of sin? Which of *you*, my brethren? How many graces and blessings do you not owe to that crucified Lord? In how many sore temptations have you not been defended and strengthened? In how many bitter sorrows have you not been comforted? From how many shameful falls have you not been raised up? O Christian soul! for whom Christ died, look upon that bleeding, suffering, dying Saviour, and, if nothing else will move you, let those ghastly wounds, which your sins have made, plead with you. Acknowledge your transgressions; abase yourself in the very dust. Let that sacred

Passion plead with you, that infinite love plead with you, that Precious Blood plead with you, those last tender words plead with you, and teach you, for their sake and your soul's sake, to love the Lord more dearly, to dread sin more effectually, and never, as long as you live, to add to that heavy burden by any wicked deed of yours.

So shall, a few days hence, the veil be lifted from the cross, and our sorrow be turned to joy, for when the Lord of Glory shall arise we too shall arise with him, and reign with him in glory for evermore.

SERMON LVIII.

DANGEROUS COMPANIONSHIP.

Walk circumspectly; not as unwise, but as wise.—EPHES. v. 15–16.

TO-DAY, my dear brethren, I propose to make a few remarks on the dangerous occasions of impurity, so common in these times.

The danger of which I wish specially to speak is that which comes from the familiar acquaintance which now exists to such a great extent, and is taken so much as a matter of course, between young persons of different sexes. This undue familiarity is too common everywhere in this country; and more than anywhere else in a city like that in which we live. Young women here with us, even though they be Catholics, and good enough Catholics in some respects, seem to forget, or rather never to begin to realize, the laws of decorum and modesty which well-instructed persons, even though not professing to be

specially religious, have hitherto rightly taken for granted.

To take a flagrant instance. A priest, being a man educated according to the rules of respectable society, is unspeakably surprised when he for the first time hears some young woman, apparently of a careful conscience, ask him if it is a sin to flirt. For what is this which is called flirting? It is simply deliberately and wantonly acting in a way to attract the attention of particular persons of the opposite sex, to make signals which are to be understood as marks of preference for, or of desire of acquaintance with, some young man or men whom she may chance to see on the street. A sin to flirt! How can you ask such a question? Why, outwardly and at the first appearance, the act is not very different from that of an abandoned woman seeking to attract those whom she thinks will notice her. The intention, of course, in your minds is often comparatively harmless, it is true; but by outward standards the act is simply disreputable. Furthermore, it shows a feeling which any lady, really worthy of the name, would hesitate to show even to one whose character she well knew to be good, and who had for a long time given to her respectful and proper attentions. A woman or girl who flirts seems to be, if she is not in reality, lost to all sense of decency; and those are almost as much so who shamelessly walk at night up and down the avenues in the hope of attracting attention.

This seeking to form unknown acquaintances of the opposite sex or to attract special attention among them is, then, a thing which no Catholic girl should think of, if she has any sense of shame. But when such acquaintances are formed by an introduction in

itself proper, they should be very carefully considered. For a young woman to make one of the other sex her friend or familiar companion, as she well may one of her own, is a thing which should be unheard of. She should have but one such friend, and he should be one who has acted honorably to her by proposing to her to take the honorable part of her husband, and whom she has before God and in her conscience felt to be worthy, and accepted by a binding engagement. Before that, and to all other men, politeness with proper and modest reserve should be the constant rule, affection and familiarity out of the question. And yet we find girls keeping company, as it is called, and that without any sort of serious guarantee of the purposes of the other party, not only with one after another, but even with more than one at once.

For the reasons, plain enough, on which these directions rest, promiscuous assemblies of both sexes, such as those to be found at certain gatherings, now unfortunately so popular, are full of danger, and had far better in all cases be avoided. A freedom of manners prevails in them—to say nothing of direct temptations to the senses—and an ease of making acquaintance, which opens a free door to sin. I do not wish to be too severe, but, as a rule, I do say, leave such places alone. Young women, respect yourselves; demand the respect of others. There is the moral in a nutshell.

Palm Sunday.

EPISTLE. *Phil. ii.* 5-11. Brethren: Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery himself to be equal with God: but debased himself, taking the form of a servant, being made to the likeness of men, and in shape found as a man. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and in hell. And that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. xxvii.* 62–66. And the next day, which followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying: Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said, while he was yet alive: After three days I will rise again. Command therefore the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day: lest his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said to them: You have a guard; go, guard it as you know. And they departing, made the sepulchre sure with guards, sealing the stone.

SERMON LIX.

HARDNESS OF HEART.

To-day if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

These words, my dear brethren, are taken from the beginning of the office recited by the clergy on this and the following days, up to Holy Thursday. They entreat us not to let this time, precious above all others, go by without making the use of it which our Lord means that we should make; not to let him show his love for us without giving him love in return.

"Harden not your hearts." How is it that we harden our hearts? It is by putting off our repentance; by clinging to the world and its pleasures, to the gratification of our sinful passions, and waiting for some time to come when it will be more convenient to give them up, or when we shall feel more strongly moved to do so. We think that this time will surely come, that the stream of God's graces will be uninterrupted, and that when necessity urges we can avail ourselves of the one that happens to be then within our reach as easily as we could have done of the many that went by long ago.

But, my brethren, this is a great and a terrible mistake. It may be, indeed, that God in his goodness and mercy has many graces yet in store for us equal in themselves to those which we have had; but if we have despised and neglected the past ones they will not be the same for us as those were which went before. A word of warning, a single prayer, the sight of the crucifix or of our Blessed Mother, a

pious picture, an Agnus Dei, is enough to move the innocent soul of a child to the love of God; the most powerful mission-sermon often fails to make any impression on one who has spent his life in sin. It is not the grace that is wanting on God's part. No, he is there in his power; his arm is not shortened; he is still mighty to save. But his voice seems to the deaf ear of the sinner faint and indistinct; his message is the same old story. Yes, it is the same old story; it must be the same, for there is but one. There is but one name under heaven whereby we can be saved, only one Gospel which we can preach, and the sinner has heard it so often with indifference that its interest is gone.

Then—most dangerous delusion of all—he comforts himself with the hope that at least he will die in the grace of God; that somehow or other he will, as he passes from life to death, be brought from death to life. He forgets that the sacraments were not given to give repentance to the sinner; no, they have for their object to give pardon and grace to those who have repented. Do you think it is of the slightest use to anoint with oil the senses of a man who lies unconscious, and who has not, while he had the use of his mind, turned really and truly away in his heart from his sinful life? The priest does it, indeed, in hopes that he may have repented; but how faint is that hope for those who have suddenly been stricken down! And even if there is more time; even if some sort of confession can be made, is it so sure that the hardened heart, which has all its life loved and clung to its sins, will now love God and hate sin? God's mercy is great, it is true; he may now give extraordinary graces, but he is not

bound to do so ; and if the ordinary ones have failed before they may also fail now.

Yes, my brethren, now is the time—a better time than your last hour. Now in this Passion season the Precious Blood of Christ is flowing more freely for you than you can expect ever to find it again. Listen to his voice now ; do not wait till it becomes fainter. If you have not spent Lent well so far, come now and make the most of the help so abundantly given you in these holy days. Harden not your hearts any longer ; it is a dangerous game to play.

SERMON LX.

SPIRIT OF HOLY WEEK.

Think diligently upon him that endured such opposition from sinners against himself.—HEB. xii. 3.

THE week which we this Sunday enter upon, my dear brethren, is called Holy Week ; and of all the many sacred seasons which the church has set apart, this is by far the most solemn and sacred. Everything which it is within the power of external rites and ceremonies to do has been done by the church in these services, in order to bring home to her children the great lesson which this holy season should teach. And while it is true that the church has not made attendance obligatory under pain of mortal sin, yet it would argue a very poor and ungrateful spirit, and one but little in accordance with that of the church, if any one should without good reason neglect to be present.

Now, what is the truth which these services have

it for their object to impress upon our minds? No other than that fundamental, distinctive truth—the Passion and death of Christ, its reason and effects. The church this week excludes from commemoration everything else, and applies herself exclusively to tracing the steps of her Lord and Founder from his entry into Jerusalem in the midst of acclamations and rejoicings, to the entombment of his dead and blood-stained body in the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea. Now, every one must have, necessarily has, in these events the greatest interest—an interest which surpasses every other.

And, first, as to those who are in the habit of going frequently to the sacraments, who understand their great value, and find in these means of grace their chief consolation in the midst of the troubles and cares which surround them. For these the commemoration of the Passion and death of Christ cannot but be profitable. The author of "The Following of Christ" tells us that we ought not to consider so much the gift of the lover as the love of the giver. And we all know that we esteem the trifling present made by a dear friend more than much more costly things which we have ourselves bought or earned. Now, the sacraments are not merely inestimable treasures in themselves; they are also tokens and pledges of the love of Him who instituted them, bought by him at the cost of his own most Precious Blood, given to us to show us his love to us. Every time a man goes to confession, every time he receives Holy Communion, he is receiving that which was instituted and established and bestowed upon him out of love; and if he wishes to know how great that love was he ought to have a lively sense of what it

cost our Lord to merit those graces for us—namely, his bitter Passion and death.

But there are many who neglect the sacraments, who come to them but seldom, perhaps only to their Easter Communion; perhaps not even to that. What is to be thought of those who act in this way? Certainly, however smart and keen and intelligent they may be, or fancy themselves to be, in lower matters which are nearer to them and fall beneath their senses—in money-getting, in trade, in art, in literature—such men show but little sense and understanding about things which are of real importance and value. In what way may these duller and obtuser minds learn to appreciate these higher things? Certainly the price given for a thing by a prudent man is a good means of learning what it is worth. Now, if those who neglect the sacraments, who make but little of them, would during this week apply themselves to the consideration of the price paid by our Lord for those sacraments, I have but little doubt that they would be led to form a truer notion of their value and importance.

I wish I could conclude without alluding to another class which, though I trust it is not numerous, yet does exist—I mean those who do not neglect the sacraments, but those who do worse: who profane them. Those who make bad confessions, who conceal mortal sins, who have no sorrow for their sins and no purpose of amendment, who make the infinite mercy and goodness of God a reason and pretext for wallowing in vice and sin—what shall be said of these? We know that our Lord is reigning now gloriously in heaven; that nothing which we can do can cause him loss or pain; yet it is also true

that those who act in this way do all that lies in their power to trample under foot that Precious Blood which was shed for them. But while there is life there is hope, and if even those would devote this week to meditation on the Passion of our Lord, they might form a just estimate of what their souls cost our Lord, and turn to him while there is yet time.

Easter Sunday.

EPISTLE. 1 *Cor. v.* 7, 8. Brethren: Purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new mass, as you are unleavened. For Christ, our pasch, is sacrificed. Therefore let us feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

GOSPEL. *St. Mark xvi.* 1–7. At that time: Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, bought sweet spices, that coming they might anoint Jesus. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they come to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen. And they said one to another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And looking, they saw the stone rolled back, for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe: and they were astonished. And he said to them: Be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he is risen, he is not here; behold the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee; there you shall see him as he told you.

SERMON LXI.

EASTER JOY.

Hæc dies, quam fecit Dominus:
Exultemus, et lætemur in ea.—Ps. cxvii. 24.

"*This is the day which the Lord hath made:*
Let us be glad and rejoice in it."

So sings the Psalmist. So sings the church to-day in Holy Mass, and every Christian heart beats with the response: "Let us be glad and rejoice."

A happy Easter, then, to you all, my dear brethren! A happy Easter to the old, to whom, in the natural course of things, many returns of this blessed day cannot come! A happy Easter to the young, rejoicing in all the freshness and vigor of youth, and confidently looking forward to many renewals of Easter joys! A happy Easter to the rich, upon whom God has bestowed an abundance of worldly goods! And a thrice happy Easter to God's own special friends, the poor! Thus holy church bids all be glad and rejoice, for to-day Christ is risen, the Saviour of us all.

The joy of Easter, my dear brethren, like that of Christmas, is all-pervading. We feel it in the air we breathe, we see it in the sparkling eye and radiant countenance of the child. The quick and hearty salutation of our friends, "A happy Easter to you!" increases our own joy, for we perceive that all about us are sharers with us in this great gift of the risen Christ.

But the joy of Easter differs from that of Christmas in this: that the latter brings to us the glad tidings of the coming of the true King, the strong

and valiant leader of the mighty host of Israel, and our hearts leap with joy as we go forth, with buoyant step and strengthened arm, and fight the great battle of life. Easter joy is the joy of victory, for our gallant Leader, the strong Son of God, has gone before; he has overcome the enemy, and death is swallowed up in victory.

Yes, Christ has fought the battle and won. But there remains for us a battle to be fought, but not an uncertain one; for we have received virtue from the victory of Christ, and by following him faithfully, by keeping our eye fixed steadily on the banner of Christ—the banner of the cross—our victory, too, is certain.

This, then, is why Easter time gladdens the heart of every true Christian, for it brings with it the assured hope of final victory over sin, which is the sting of death, by a glorious resurrection.

But, my dear brethren, 'mid all these rejoicings may there not be some poor soul among us who does not participate in the joys of Easter time? Some soul for which Christ on Good Friday poured forth the last drop of his Sacred Blood, but which to-day finds itself estranged, nay, even in a hostile attitude towards its only true friend? Oh! would to God there were not even one such ungrateful soul in the whole world. But, alas! I fear there are many upon whom our loving Saviour, the risen Christ, must look this day as his declared enemies; some wretched souls over whom hangs the thick, black cloud of mortal sin, unrepented and unforgiven, and through which the bright rays of God's infinite love cannot penetrate. Yet even these need not despair; the joys of Easter time may still be theirs, for the same loving and

sword-pierced Heart of Jesus is still ready to be reconciled with them. Oh! if there be such a one present here this morning let him take courage, come at once to the tribunal of penance, become one of the friends of the risen Christ, and share with us the joys of Easter.

And those who have been, but are no longer, strangers to God's grace, persevere. I exhort you, during the short space of this life in the friendship of our crucified Lord, and yours, too, will, like his, be a glorious resurrection.

Let us, then, my dear brethren, on this happy Easter day elevate our hearts to God in humble thanksgiving for all his benefits, and let us unite with the holy church in the prayer of the office for to-day. O God! who, through thine only-begotten Son, hast on this day overcome death and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life, we humbly beseech thee that, as by thy special grace preventing us, thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continued help we may bring the same to good effect. Through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

SERMON LXII.

EASTER AND THE LOVE OF GOD.

This is the day which the Lord hath made: let us be glad and rejoice therein.—Ps. cxvii. 24.

FAMILIAR words these, my brethren, and for ever associated in our minds with this greatest of all

Christian festivals. Frequently on this day and through its octave does the church repeat them to us ; they sound now continually in our ears. And no doubt they find some echo in our hearts. Yes, we are glad, we do rejoice ; surely no one who can call himself a Christian could hear unmoved the outburst of our triumph and exultation yesterday as the "Gloria in Excelsis" was intoned in the Mass, telling us that the lion of Juda has conquered, that God has arisen and that his enemies are scattered, that he has put death and hell under his feet. For the moment at least we would say with St. Paul: "O death! where is thy victory ? O death ! where is thy sting ? Thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

But as the newness, the freshness of the Easter joy and triumph passes away, does not another feeling come and mingle with it ? A feeling of awe, almost of dread, comes upon us, like that terror which came upon the guards at the sepulchre as they saw the angel who rolled away the stone, of whom St. Matthew says that his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow ; like that fear which came even on the holy women as they saw the two angels in shining apparel standing at the empty tomb ; and upon the Apostles themselves when Jesus stood in their midst soon after ; for the evangelist tells us that they were troubled and frighted, in spite of his words giving them peace and telling them not to be afraid.

Indeed, I think there was no one of those who saw our risen Lord, except his glorious and Blessed Mother, whose love was so perfect that it quite cast out this fear. And still more is it in our poor and im-

perfect hearts; we cannot shake it off. How many are there of us, unless, indeed, those innocent ones who have not yet known what sin is, who, if this were really and truly the morning of the resurrection, and the risen one could be seen by those who should seek him, would arise gladly and run to meet him, and fall in loving adoration at his feet?

If we can in our inmost heart feel that we would, we have reason indeed to be glad and rejoice to-day. But to feel so there must be something in us besides that thrill of triumph and of victory which overpowers us as the splendor of the resurrection first breaks upon our souls. There must be a true, fervent, and deep love of the God who to-day comes so near to us; a hatred from the bottom of our hearts and souls of all that in the least degree separates us from him; there must be, beside faith, also hope and charity, such as the saints have had—that hope which knows that he loves us and has forgiven us, that charity which would make us die sooner than offend him again. And these we have not because of our sins.

Yes, it is sin which casts the shadow on our Easter; it is the love and affection for it which still remains in us; it is that compromising spirit which is even at our best times holding us back, keeping us from fully loving, trusting, and giving ourselves up to God, for fear that we might lose something by doing so; it is this that makes us afraid to approach him and to share in his joy. As for mortal sin, that, of course, takes the happiness of Easter away altogether; to one who is in its darkness the thought of meeting God brings, and can bring, no thought of joy. But even venial sin brings its dread with it, too.

And what is the remedy for this dread? It is very simple. It is only to try now to begin to love with our whole hearts him who has loved us, and given his life for us; whose delight is to be with us and to have us come to him; to keep nothing back from him—in short, to live here in our feeble measure the life we hope to live in heaven. This is the way, and the only way, for us to enter now as we would wish into the joy of our Lord.

SERMON LXIII.

THE TRIUMPH OF CHRIST.

This is the day which the Lord hath made: let us rejoice and be glad in it.—Ps. cxvii. 24.

THE festival of Easter is, above all things, my brethren, a day of joy. Just as we love the sunshine more after days of cloud and tempest, so also is our joy keener and more intense when it follows sorrows.

It is for this reason that the joy of Easter is greater than that of Christmas, or of any other season of the Christian year. For we have been passing through a time of sorrow. We have beheld in Passion-tide our dearest Lord in suffering. We have beheld him as the King of Martyrs, worthy of the title, because his pains were so far in excess of anything that mere man has ever suffered or could ever suffer. We have seen him in his agony in the garden, when the sins of the whole world and of all time were presented to his vision and pressed heavily upon him, filling his

Sacred Heart with deepest grief. We have called to mind his betrayal by his trusted friend and disciple; his arraignment before impious and unjust judges; his cruel condemnation and death. Despised and rejected by his own chosen people whom he had come to save, a robber and murderer preferred before him, we have beheld him abandoned to the tortures of the heathen soldiers, scourged, and spit upon, and crowned with thorns, and finally led forth to die a malefactor's death upon the cross.

And worse than all is the thought that he was forsaken by those whom he held most dear, those whom he had chosen to be his special friends and disciples, and who had been his constant companions in his public ministry. They all forsook him and fled, leaving him to die

Then we have followed him along the sorrowful way of the cross; we have meditated deeply upon his three last hours of agony; we have almost heard his deep, expiring groan as he rendered up his soul to the hands of his Father.

Now, if we have thus learnt well the lessons of Passion-tide, the joy of Easter will come to us in all its fulness. If we have pondered well the depth of humiliation to which our Lord subjected himself in his death upon the cross, we shall well realize the greatness of his triumph to-day. The joy that filled the hearts of the Apostles, of the holy women, and, above all, the Immaculate Heart of our Blessed Lady when they knew that the Lord had risen indeed will be ours to-day, and we shall cry out in the words which the church puts into our mouths: "This is the day which the Lord hath made: let us rejoice and be glad in it"; for "the Lord is my

strength and my praise, and is become my salvation." Therefore, to-day the voice of praise and of salvation "is in the dwellings of the just throughout the world."

"For the right hand of the Lord hath wrought strength"; the right hand of the Lord—that is, his almighty power—has raised up Jesus from the dead. He has risen glorious and triumphant, and in his glory and triumph all mankind are sharers. For by his resurrection he has overcome death and opened unto us the gates of everlasting life. He has triumphed over sin, which brought death into the world, and which was the cause of his death. His resurrection, therefore, means our deliverance from sin and death, and is a pledge to us of that life which he will give to his faithful ones.

Surely, then, we can have no greater cause for rejoicing than this. Pray, then, my brethren, that your hearts may be filled with the true spirit of Easter-joy. "Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full; and your joy no man shall take from you."

Low Sunday.

EPISTLE. 1 *St. John v.* 4–10. Dearly beloved: Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not in water only, but in water and blood. And it is the spirit that testifieth, that Christ is the truth. For there are three that give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one. And there are three that give testimony on earth: the spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three are one. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. For this is the testimony of God, which is greater, because he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth in the Son of God, hath the testimony of God in himself.

GOSPEL. *St. John xx.* 19–31. At that time: When it was late that same day, being the first day of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands, and his side. The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord. And he said to them again: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this he breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose you shall retain, they are retained. Now Thomas, one of the

twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Unless I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days his disciples were again within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then he saith to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not incredulous, but faithful. Thomas answered, and said to him: My Lord, and my God. Jesus saith to him: Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed. Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing you may have life in his name.

SERMON LXIV.

HOW TO USE GOD'S GIFTS.

If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.—Ep. to Colos. iii. 1.

The feast of to-day, my dear brethren, brings to a close the solemnities of Easter; and it was the practice, in the early ages of the church, for those who had been baptized on Holy Saturday to put off, on this day, the white garments which they then assumed, and to resume again their accustomed occupation. The white garments were but an external

sign of that internal purity and cleanliness which the soul received in the waters of Holy Baptism, and the soul, thus purified and strengthened by God's grace, went boldly forth to the battle-field of life, to meet again its three great and deadly enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil. So we, who, during the penitential season just closed, have faithfully observed the laws of holy church, and, by fasting, have brought the flesh under subjection to the spirit; by foregoing our accustomed pleasures and amusements have brought the world under our feet, and, by a good confession and Communion, have again enlisted in the ranks of Christ, and thus declared ourselves eternal enemies of sin and the devil, start again to-day with renewed strength to follow our Leader, the risen Christ, to certain victory.

St. Paul, in the Epistle from which the text is taken, reminds the Christians at Colossa that, if they be risen with Christ, their thoughts must now be turned to where Christ is—sitting at the right hand of God. "Mind the things that are above," he continues, "not the things that are upon the earth; for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

O brethren! would that Catholics did but realize this great truth! Would that their thoughts and affections were directed towards their eternal destiny! Absorbed, as they are, in the sordid pursuits of this life, they cannot be too often reminded that we are here only on trial. An almighty and merciful God has, with a lavish hand, surrounded us with the means of gratifying our reasonable desires and appetites. But, alas! the very gifts of God serve not unfrequently to make us forget the Giver. Look

around you and see what is the object for which this noisy, bustling world is striving; what the end for which most men seem to exist. The fact is, brethren, that Mammon, the heathen god of riches, has disputed Christ's sovereignty over the hearts of men, and has actually erected his altar in those very hearts where the grace of Christ once reigned. The only conception men seem to have of this present life is this: that it is a place where we are to strive to become wealthy in the shortest possible time, without being over scrupulous as to the means, and then to retire from active pursuits, the better to indulge our sensual appetites. They thus invert the order of Divine Providence, and make an end of that which was intended only as a means to enable us to attain our eternal destiny.

Everything in this world, my dear brethren, was intended by God for our happiness here and as a pledge of an eternal and infinitely greater happiness hereafter. It is a great mistake to suppose that Christianity requires us to ignore these wonderful gifts of a kind Providence, and to forego all the pleasures of this life. No, not at all! Indeed, we are absolutely obliged to make use of many of them if we would maintain our very existence.

God acts towards us as a kind and affectionate father acts towards his child. The father knows that his child loves him, and he feels confident that the little presents he makes the child from time to time will only serve to strengthen the fond affection which nature has implanted between them.

But what would you think if those gifts of the kind father served only to estrange from him the heart of his child? You would, undoubtedly, say

that such a state of things was unnatural. Well, so it is, my dear brethren, with us, who, after all, are only children of an older growth. God, our Creator and Father, has given us life and all the things in this beautiful universe to enjoy. And all he asks in return is our love—our hearts. But, remember, he is not satisfied with an imperfect and partial love. He is a jealous God, and will allow no one to share our hearts with him. So that when men fix their affections on the things of this world without referring them to God, and use these gifts without regard to the Giver, they too are acting in an unnatural or, at least, in an irrational manner. Give your whole heart to God, brethren, and then you will enjoy his gifts, and, as St. Paul says, "When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with him in glory."

SERMON LXV.

THE CHRISTIAN'S PEACE.

Jesus came, and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples, therefore, were glad when they saw the Lord. He said therefore to them again: Peace be to you.—GOSPEL OF THE DAY.

HE stood in their midst. To-day he stands in the midst of us and utters the self-same words, "Peace be unto you." And he shows us his hands and his side, and we are glad. And again he says, "Peace be unto you."

To be at peace with the world is the aim of many

men. But to have one's life run smoothly on, to be hindered neither here nor there, to be always in the sunshine and never in the shadow, may bring us peace and gladness, but not the peace and gladness that our Lord would impart. For after his words of gentle salutation he showed them his hands and his side impressed with the wound-prints of his Passion, as if to say: "The peace which I wish you is that which comes after strife, conflict, and sorrow; that peace which is the rest and the reward for labor and endurance."

Yes, dear friends, ours is to strive, to contend with self, with a nature that is fallen, with a proneness to evil, with desires that are selfish and carnal. To contend with the world, to disavow its principles, not to listen to its temptations; to realize and to confess that pleasure, success, ease, money, fame, are not the objects for which a noble soul must seek, but that God is our true end, and that mortification and self denial, the cross, are the true means to arrive at that end, the way to come to union with God.

To be at peace with the world; yes, I admit that it is a thing to be desired, but only so that we are at peace with Almighty God, too. And how is that peace gained? Only by the keeping of his law. At peace with the world, because the world cannot disturb one at peace with God; this is the Christian's life. But so great a boon is not gained without a strife, as the joy of Easter is not till the sorrow of the Passion has passed.

Our duty, then, dear brethren, is to strive, and to keep the law of God, that first law written on our hearts, that law which he has given to us both by his

words and by his life on earth, and which he still repeats to us through his holy church.

Foolish, indeed, are we above all others if our Easter joy is only that of the worldling, and our peace that which the world gives. This is not the peace that comes after looking at his hands and his side; not the joy that the disciples felt as they gazed on the risen Saviour, who stands to-day here in our midst, as he did among those his first followers, and says to us, as he said to them, "Peace be to you."

We may have that peace, my brethren, if we are willing to obtain it and to deserve it as they did. We shall have it descend upon us, if, while we gaze at his hands and his side, we are conscious that we have indeed shared his Passion and cross. May indeed be ours this peace of God, which shall keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

SERMON LXVI.

TRUE AND LASTING PEACE.

Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: "Peace be to you."—FROM THE GOSPEL OF THE SUNDAY.

PEACE be to you! This is our Lord's Easter blessing, thrice repeated in the Gospel of to-day; and a blessing which all his faithful may obtain. And it is the one for which we are continually seeking, each in his own way, but which we can find nowhere but with him who to-day offers it to us.

What is this peace? Is it freedom from conflict? Is the Christian to have no battle to fight, no enemy

to overcome? No, surely our Lord does not promise us such an easy road to heaven as this. "Do not think," he says, "that I came to send peace upon earth; I came not to send peace, but the sword." We must make up our minds, for the sake of the Christian faith, to sustain not only the assaults of the devil and of our own evil passions, but also the opposition of those who should be our friends. "A man's enemies," our Saviour goes on to say, "shall be they of his own household."

In this sense, then, we cannot hope for peace in this world. No, our lot must be, if we have really enlisted in Christ's army, that of all soldiers: war, and its turmoil. As St. Paul says it was for himself so must it be for us: "combats without, fears within." Struggles for our temporal life; for God has said to Adam our father, and in him to us his children: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread"; struggles far more terrible and momentous for our spiritual life, against flesh and blood, also "against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness," in which a single slip may mean eternal ruin, a single wound instant death.

Where, then, is our peace in this inevitable war, this contest which demands all the energies of our body and soul? What peace can we have while its issue is still uncertain, its events yet unknown? Surely it seems a mockery for our Lord to say, "Peace be to you," when he sends us not peace, but war and its alarms.

But it is not a mockery; he who cannot be deceived also cannot deceive. His words are faithful and true. He has really peace to give us—peace in the midst of combat, calm even in the storm.

When the storm arose on the sea of Galilee, and he was asleep in the boat, his disciples came to him, saying: "Lord, save us, we perish." But he answered: "Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?" Was there not reason for them to be fearful, to lose their peace of mind, when death was staring them in the face, and all their efforts to save themselves were vain? No, not if they had faith to show that God was with them.

This, then, should have been their peace; this should be ours: the possession of God. He has given himself entirely for us and to us in the battle in which he has placed us. He fights on our side. What, then, have we to fear if we will only keep close to him? We are sure of the victory if we call him to our aid. As St. Paul says, "If God be for us, who is against us? He that spared not even his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how hath he not also with him given us all things?"

Peace, then, we should have in our spiritual combat; but how in the battle for our temporal life? Here we are not promised success; no, it must be defeat, at least in the end. We must lose at last by death all that we seek of the goods of this world. The peace which the world gives is then a delusion; it lasts but for an hour; the shadow of death is upon it. "O death!" says Holy Scripture, "how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions!" Here again, therefore, our true peace is in the possession of him who is eternal; this is the peace which the world can neither give nor take away. All the storms of this world will not shake or disturb him whose house is built on this rock. "Who," again says St. Paul, "shall separate us from

the love of Christ; shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or persecution, or the sword?"

This, therefore, is the true peace of the Christian: confidence in God, indifference to all that is not God. It is the peace of our Lord himself. "My peace," he says, "I give unto you." Let us ask him indeed to give it to us, now and for evermore.

Second Sunday after Easter.

EPISTLE. 1 *St. Peter ii.* 21–25. Dearly beloved: Christ has suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps. "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." Who, when he was reviled, did not revile: when he suffered, he threatened not: but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly. Who his own self bore our sins in his body upon the tree: that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice: by whose stripes you were healed. For you were as sheep going astray: but you are now converted to the pastor and bishop of your souls.

GOSPEL. *St. John x.* 11–16. At that time: Jesus said to the Pharisees: I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. But the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, whose own sheep they are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep, and flieth; and the wolf snatcheth and scattereth the sheep: and the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling: and he hath no care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd: and I know mine, and mine know me. As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

SERMON LXVII.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

For you were as sheep going astray; but you are now converted to the pastor and bishop of your souls.—1 St. Peter ii. 25.

To-day is the Sunday of the Good Shepherd, and the church sings in joyful strains: "The Good Shepherd, who laid down his life for his sheep, yea, who was contented even to die for his flock, the Good Shepherd is risen again—Alleluia!" It is in this tender, loving, and, to us, most winning character that our Lord presents himself in the Gospel of to-day—the Good Shepherd, who knoweth his sheep, and acknowledges them as his own, whose tender care for them is so great that he is willing even to lay down his life for their sake, yet with the power to take it again for his own glory and for their eternal good. We are those sheep for whom he died, and for whom he rose again, for they are in the truest sense his sheep who believe in his name, and are gathered into his one fold, the holy Catholic Church.

But it is not enough to believe; we must also hear his voice. How have we done this in the past? Have we hearkened to his voice as he spake to us through the offices of the church, through the words of our pastors, through the still, small voice of conscience? Alas! we have been as sheep going astray. We have been deaf to his voice, as it has so often spoken to us, bidding us follow him. And, having strayed away from our Shepherd, we have refused to listen to the loving tones of that same sweet voice, calling us back to our place in the flock, but have

wandered still further away into the pleasant pastures of sin, where all seemed delight for a time, but where the wolf, the great enemy of our souls, was lurking, waiting for his chance to seize us as his prey for ever. Oh! into what danger have we run by thus wandering from the right path! But now, during the holy season of Lent that is passed, the church has been appealing to us through her solemn offices, and through the earnest words spoken by her ministers, to forsake our evil ways, to leave the deceitful pleasures of sin, and return to where we can alone find pasture for our souls, to the sacraments of the church, wherein the Good Shepherd gives himself to his sheep. Many have hearkened to the call of the Saviour's voice, many have come during this holy time to the green pastures and the still waters, where the Good Shepherd feeds his flock, and, with souls restored and renewed, are prepared and determined to walk hereafter in the paths of righteousness, where he leads the way. Even when at last they shall walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death they will fear no evil, for he will be with them, his rod and his staff shall comfort them.

But there are also many, far too many, who have not listened to the voice of Jesus, as he calls them in this blessed Easter-tide. Poor, wayward sheep, they still wander in paths of their own choosing, which can only lead them into danger and into death. O foolish, wandering ones! take heed ere it is too late to the gentle voice that calls you. Your souls are soiled and sin-stained, and you have need to be washed in the stream which flows from your Shepherd's side, his Precious Blood shed for you when he laid down his life for your sake. Come, wash

and be made clean in the Sacrament of Penance which he has ordained for your cleansing. You were as sheep going astray; be now converted and return to Jesus, the pastor, the shepherd, the bishop of your souls. You have been famishing for the food you need for your spiritual sustenance. Come, then, to him who so graciously and tenderly invites you to the table which he has prepared for you. Draw nigh with joy to the heavenly banquet of his Sacred Body and the goodly, overflowing cup of his Precious Blood, that your souls may be fed and have life eternal. Then will you be strong in the presence of your enemies, his mercy will follow you all the days of your life, and you will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever, even in that house of many mansions which he has prepared for those who love and follow him. For he has said of those who hear his voice and follow him: "I give them life everlasting, and they shall not perish for ever, and no man shall snatch them out of my hand." And remember that other promise of his: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood has everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." Yes, poor, lost sheep though we have been, if we now turn from our wayward paths to hear his voice and follow him, he will raise us up at the last day, and place us among his favored sheep upon his right hand, to be glad for ever in the light of his countenance.

SERMON LXVIII.

DEAD FAITH.

That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts.—EPHES. iii. 17.

HOLY WRIT teaches us in many places, my brethren, that God dwells in our hearts by charity, and here we are taught that he dwells by faith also. Of course, the meaning is the same. For an elect soul to know Christ is to love him. And even for a reprobate soul to know the truth of religion is that indescribable boon which makes a possible salvation capable of becoming quickly real. How terrible the misfortune of the Calvinist who believes that a bad life necessarily means absence of faith! How consoling to know that our sinful friends, if they have but the true faith, have a seed of eternal life which may yet spring up into a fruitful tree!

Yet it is terrible to think of how some men trifle with their faith. Brethren, look at the end and judge the beginning by it. The end of wicked men is damnation, hopeless and eternal. Now, what is the faith in hell? Something that makes the Christian's torment altogether peculiar. There the name of Christian, now so noble, now entitling its bearer to pardon for every sin if but breathed forth with an act of sorrow—there the name of Christian will be a nickname. In one way he will have more faith then than now; he will know more of revealed truth, have a clearer knowledge of heavenly things. But then the hand wounded by the nail, and which now is never out of reach, will be withdrawn finally and for ever. Imagine the agony of a soul in hell, whom

each article of faith will cause for ever to wail and weep only this one sentence: "It is all my own fault." Brethren, you may complain that this sort of preaching does not provoke to much mirth. But there are those who should know that for them this ought to be a time of weeping and not of being merry: persons who have faith in their hearts, but not Christ. For see how men in Italy, holding fast to the truth with one hand, have with the other set up the abomination of desolation in the holy place. And see how, in France, men who deem themselves insulted if called anything but Catholics, yet deliberately rob the children of the people of the bread of life by establishing paganism in the schools. And see how many there are among us whose faith, instead of being a rule to live by, an irresistible attraction towards our Lord in a true grief for sin and strict union with him, sealed by frequent Communion, is but something handed down from father to son, like name and color and race—a traditional faith—and this proved by their vicious lives.

But happy are they in whose hearts faith has prepared a dwelling for our Saviour. Our Lord is surely present within us if we are in the state of grace. Hear what he says: "If any one love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make an abode with him." He comes, indeed, silently; he hushes the festive greetings of the angels who escort him; he hides the dazzling glory of his ascended triumph, for now it is faith and not sight. But there in the heart he none the less dwells. We live with him. The Christian feels his presence. He has an interior life whose very breath is that presence. He is stamped with our

Lord's character. Such a soul is truly and literally called *faithful*—faith-full. And once you are intimately acquainted with him you perceive in his ways and actions that our Lord lives with him. Better yet, he perceives it himself. How different he is from one whose knowledge of religion is mere persuasion of the mind and empty talk! With the true Christian knowledge is power. To know the true faith is for him to know how to live; better yet, to know how to suffer, how to wait, how to love, how to die.

Brethren, this congregation is divided into two parts—those who are to be saved and those who are not. Those of you who are to be saved are those in whose hearts Jesus Christ actually dwells by faith. Those who are to be lost are those whose faith means that Christ has a claim against them, payment of which they will postpone till it is too late.

SERMON LXIX.

SUFFERING FALSE ACCUSATIONS.

He delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly.—EPISTLE OF THE DAY.

I SUPPOSE, my dear brethren, that there is no grievance to which we are subjected more common, and certainly there are few more distressing, than that of being judged unfairly by others. As Catholics we are all specially liable to this; we all know how Protestants, even those who profess to be quite friendly to us personally, and who sometimes will

say a good word or two for our religion, still calmly assume, as a matter of course, that we believe and practise many things which we and all intelligent and honest men detest and abhor. They say, for instance, that we worship images; that we pay money not only to have our sins forgiven, but even for permission in advance to commit new ones; that we believe the pope to be Almighty God; that we maintain that the end justifies the means; and so on to any extent. It was only a few days ago that it was unblushingly stated in an assembly of one of their sects that the Catholic Church was more guilty in the matter of permitting divorce than other denominations. There seems hardly to be a falsehood about us so gross or so absurd that some of them will not be found to believe and to assert it.

And we of the clergy are more exposed to these slanders than any one else. They say, they take for granted, that we are hypocrites and deceivers; that under a cloak of sanctity we practise all kinds of vice; that we do not believe a word of what we teach; that our only object in our profession is to exercise power or to make money; these things and many others pass current in the world about us, so we are looked upon by many as detestable wretches not fit to live. In us, especially, are our Lord's words fulfilled: "You shall be hated by all men for my name's sake."

But it is not only from outsiders, or in matters where religion is concerned, that we have to put up with false charges and unjust suspicions. In our own private character and actions we all find ourselves liable to them; we find our neighbors and acquaintances judging and even speaking unfairly about us.

Priests suffer in this way sometimes from their own parishioners; the laity perhaps from the priest, and often certainly from each other. How frequently we hear people complain of slander or belying from those whom they supposed to be their friends; one would think that it was not the exception, but the rule.

Now all this is certainly very hard to bear. And yet as we go through life we cannot expect to be free from it; and we must try to find a way of bearing it as well as we can. What is the best way?

One way, and a very good way, of putting up with this trouble is to make allowances for the unavoidable prejudice, ignorance, and imperfection of those who say about us what we know to be false, who do to us what we know to be unjust. They may not, they do not, know this as well as we do. "Father, forgive them," said our Lord on the cross, "for they know not what they do." We think others are slandering or injuring us through malice; ten to one they think they are in the right. Probably we ourselves should act just the same way in their place.

Make allowances, then; give our neighbors more credit for good intentions; that is one way to put up with this suffering which we cannot altogether avoid or put a stop to. But a better and perhaps an easier way is the one recommended by St. Peter in to-day's Epistle. "Dearly beloved," he says, "Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Who, when he was reviled, did not revile; when he suffered he threatened not, but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly." He, the holy, the innocent one, was more wickedly

and unjustly accused and judged than any of us sinners have been, or ever can be ; shall we not then bear, if need be, the same treatment for his sake ? To be spoken evil of falsely is to be like him ; it is the mark, the badge of the Christian. This is the example he has left us that we should follow his steps ; shall we refuse to profit by it ?

Third Sunday after Easter.

Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph.

Epistle. 1 *St. Peter ii.* 11–19. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims to refrain yourselves from carnal desires, which war against the soul; having your conversation good among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evildoers, considering you by your good works they may glorify God in the day of visitation. Be ye subject therefore to every human creature for God's sake; whether it be to the king as excelling, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of the good; for so is the will of God, that by doing well you may silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not as making liberty a cloak of malice, but as the servants of God. Honor all men; love the brotherhood; fear God; honor the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Epistle of the Feast. *Gen. xlix.* 22–26. Joseph is a growing son, a growing son and comely to behold: the daughters run to and fro upon the wall. But they that held darts provoked him, and quarrelled with him, and envied him. His bow rested upon the strong, and the bands of his arms and his hands were loosed by the hands of the mighty one of Jacob: thence he came forth a pastor, the stone of Israel. The God of thy Father shall be thy helper, and the Almighty shall bless thee with the blessings of

heaven above, with the blessings of the deep that lieth beneath, with the blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of thy father are strengthened with the blessings of his fathers: until the desire of the everlasting hills should come: may they be upon the head of Joseph, and upon the crown of the Nazarite among his brethren.

GOSPEL. *St. John xvi.* 16–22. At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: A little while, and now you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me: because I go to the Father. Then some of his disciples said one to another: What is this that he saith to us: A little while, and you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me, and because I go to the Father? They said therefore: What is this that he saith, a little while? we know not what he speaketh. And Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him: and he said to them: Of this do you inquire among yourselves, because I said: A little while, and you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me? Amen, amen I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice: and you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So also you now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice: and your joy no man shall take from you.

GOSPEL OF THE FEAST. *St. Luke iii.* 21–23. At that time it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also being baptized and praying, heaven was opened: and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape as a dove upon him: and a voice came from heaven: Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased. And Jesus himself was beginning about the age of thirty years: being (as it was supposed) the son of Joseph.

SERMON LXX.

DEVOTION TO ST. JOSEPH.

Go to Joseph, and do all that he shall say to you.—GEN. xli. 55.

IT is Joseph's nearness to Jesus and Mary during his life that leads us now, when he reigns with them in heaven, to confidently call upon him for succor in our needs, and especially do we go to him because to his patronage the whole church has been commended, that by his intercession he may do for her and each of her members what he did for Jesus and his Mother when he was in the flesh.

Wisely has the church made him her protector, for his power with God must be very great. Of this we can have no doubt, when we remember that to his care were entrusted the purest and the best who have ever walked this earth—Jesus and Mary—Jesus, the Son of God; Mary, his stainless Virgin Mother, whose chaste soul the Holy Ghost made his dwelling-place, delighted with its beauty.

Above the seats of all the bright angels who serve in the courts of the Most High Mary's throne was raised, and one day she would be the angels' mistress and queen; Jesus was their Lord, their Maker, before whom they bowed in lowliest reverence. And yet Mary was Joseph's spouse, and Jesus rendered him the obedience a son should give a father. Very worthy must he have been who held so high an office.

Joseph was a necessary member of the family. He served as a veil to screen from the vulgar gaze the deep mysteries of the Incarnation and Nativity; he

led the way into Egypt, and his faithful arm supported the Mother and the Babe during the journey; he brought them back to their own land and provided shelter for them; their daily bread was the fruit of his labor—in a word, during the boyhood and youth of our Lord they were entirely dependent upon him.

Such, then, was Joseph's position in the Holy Family; he was the master and guardian of the household; and this is what the church would have him be in every Christian family. It is you, Christian fathers and mothers, who should be especially devout to St. Joseph, for he is your patron in a particular manner. You, like him, have the cares of the household upon you; you must provide for the life and health of the children God has given you; it is your duty to see that they are instructed in the faith and attentive to their religious duties, and that they study their school lessons; you should guard them against the dangers they must meet with in a great city like this, and keep them away from those who may lead them to evil; and, above all, you should give them good example in the practice of virtue. To fulfil your duties well you need divine assistance. Go to Joseph—go to the foster-father of Jesus Christ; he will intercede for you, and obtain the many graces of which you stand in need. Go to him and tell him all your troubles; you will find him very gracious.

But St. Joseph is the patron not of heads of families alone. The church would have you all, dear brethren, "go to Joseph and do all that he shall say to you." From him she would have you learn a tender love to Jesus, a love manifesting itself in deeds, not simply in words. Joseph devoted himself to the service of our Lord, and so should we. But how can

we presume to say that we love or serve Jesus if we do not keep his commands; if we neglect our duties as Catholics and as members of society? Let us show how much we love him by doing something for him, as St. Joseph did, and let us, like him, be constant in our well-doing, permitting no day to pass without some acts of love to God. And if we would hope to make progress in the ways of God, let us daily "Go to Joseph and do all that he shall say."

SERMON LXXI.

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.

I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.—St. John xvi. 12

These words were spoken by our Lord in his last discourse to his disciples. What were those things which he had yet to say to them, but which they could not then bear?

They were things pertaining to the kingdom of God—that is, his church, his kingdom upon earth. He was about to leave the world and go to the Father, but he would leave behind him an organized body to represent him. During these forty days, then, he sketched out the plan of the Catholic Church, which the Apostles were to bring to completion, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, who was to teach them all truth.

These were the many things he had yet to say to them, but which they could not understand till then, because of their former imperfect and even er

roneous notions of the nature of his kingdom upon earth. He had spoken of his church before, as it were, in hints: now he speaks no longer in parables, but plainly. Listen to the few recorded words of those which he spoke during these forty days, and you will find in them an outline of the Catholic Church.

He first asserts his authority to found a kingdom in this world, saying: "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth"; and then declares that he commits this same authority to his Apostles and their successors in the church: "As my Father hath sent me, I also send you." And, lest any one should say that this power and authority were given to the Apostles alone and not to their successors, he bids them go forth into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature, and promises them his constant abiding Presence even to the end of the world. One of the Apostles he invested with a special authority over the others. The Good Shepherd would not leave his sheep in this world uncared for, so he gave to St. Peter and his successors the office of pastor of the whole church in the words, "Feed my lambs. Feed my sheep." He also set forth the means of obtaining entrance into this earthly kingdom of his—namely, faith and holy baptism—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"; and he declared the blessedness of those who would accept the faith upon the authority of his church: "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." He provided a means by which those who should sin after baptism might find pardon and remission of their sins by instituting the Sacrament of Penance, giving to his Apostles and their successors the power to for-

give and retain sins: "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained." He had already instituted on the night before his Passion the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, and during those forty days he undoubtedly gave his Apostles the necessary instructions concerning the rest of the sacraments of the new law. The Gospels do not pretend to give us all our Lord's doings and sayings, as St. John expressly tells us at the end of his Gospel. But in these recorded sayings of Jesus, during this last brief time that he spent on earth, we have the written constitution of the Catholic Church, though but in outline. The office of the pope as supreme pastor, the plenary authority of the church, and the necessity of faith upon that authority as a means of obtaining eternal salvation—all this is clearly set forth in the words that I have quoted to you.

"Go, teach all nations," said our Lord to his church; and he added, "teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you." On our part, then, is required faithful submission to his teaching, as it comes to us through the voice of his church. It is only by faith in this teaching and by a diligent observance of the commandments of God and his church that we can hope to save our souls and attain to the blessedness which he has promised.

Fourth Sunday after Easter.

EPISTLE. *St. James i.* 17–21. Dearly beloved: Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change nor shadow of vicissitude. For of his own will hath he begotten us by the word of truth, that we might be some beginning of his creatures. You know, my dearest brethren, and let every man be swift to hear, but slow to speak, and slow to anger. For the anger of man worketh not the justice of God. Wherefore casting away all uncleanness, and abundance of malice, with meekness receive the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

GOSPEL. *St. John xvi.* 5–14. At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: I go to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me: Whither goest thou? But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he shall come, he will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment. Of sin indeed: because they have not believed in me. And of justice: because I go to the Father; and you shall see me no longer. And of judgment: because the prince of this world is already judged. I have yet many things to say to you: but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, shall come, he will teach you all truth. For he shall not speak of himself: but what things soever he shall hear, he shall speak, and the things that are to come he shall show you. He shall glorify me: because he shall receive of mine, and will declare it to you.

SERMON LXXII.

EVIL CONVERSATION.

And he said to them: What are these discourses that you hold one with another? . . . And they said: Concerning Jesus of Nazareth.—LUKE xxiv. 17–19.

BRETHREN: Suppose our Lord should stand in our midst to-day and demand from each one of us, as he did from these two disciples, What are these discourses that you hold one with another? Do *our* conversations, like theirs, contain nothing reprehensible? Would our answer be as pleasing to God as theirs was? If so, brethren, we have reason to thank God, and go on our way rejoicing. But of what do the majority of men most readily converse? It is sad that we have to confess it, but God and his works, the soul and its wants are topics anything but agreeable to most of the men of our day. And so every legitimate means must be resorted to in order to make the things of God and spiritual conversation at all palatable.

And you, fathers and mothers of families, what are these conversations which you hold one with the other? What are the topics most commonly treated of in your Christian homes? Is it the virtues of your neighbors that are spoken of and recounted for your own edification and your children's imitation? Would to God it were always so! But there are homes supposed to be occupied by Christians where God's holy name is never mentioned save to be blasphemed, where the neighbor is never spoken of except to recall his follies, his vices, or even his atrocious crimes. Christian parents, beware of the

scandal your conversations may give to your family, but especially to your innocent children. Remember that many a soul to day steeped in vice received its first sinful impulse from some unguarded word, some improper topic of conversation heard in the home that should have been the nursery of every virtue.

And from you, young men and women, an answer might be profitably demanded to this important question: What are the conversations which you most readily indulge in one with the other? Are they in any way improper, or such that you would be ashamed to have them repeated in the presence of your parents? If so, then your discourses are not concerning Jesus of Nazareth, and you are not following the example of his disciples. But if in your conversations, following the Apostolic rule, the things that savor of uncleanness are not so much as mentioned amongst you, what is to be said about the precious time you squander in idle, frivolous talk? Remember that time is but the threshold of eternity, every moment of which is of the highest value to you now; and this is why on the last great day we shall be held to account for every idle word. Young men and women, never admit into your company those whose conversations are unworthy of a Christian, and especially let your own language be always in harmony with your high calling.

Indeed, brethren, to all of us this question of our Lord brings home an important lesson. For if we would lead good Christian lives we must not only abstain from all that is unbecoming or scandalous, but we must also regulate with all diligence our ordinary commonplace conversations. Let them be al-

ways such that we would not hesitate to repeat them before God or his most virtuous servants. If we would have our conversations agreeable to God and men, we should make it a rule never to speak disparagingly of those *absent*, and never take advantage of their absence to say anything which we would not dare say in their presence. And the other rule we should follow is this: never to say in the presence of others anything which could give scandal or leave a bad impression.

Brethren, if we think often of this question of our Lord, if we are diligent in following these rules, our conversations will be always edifying to our neighbors and useful to ourselves. Then, if called upon at any moment by our Lord, we can answer with his disciples, Our conversations are "concerning Jesus of Nazareth."

SERMON LXXIII.

TEMPTATION.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love him—St. James i. 12.

These words, my dear brethren, are from the Scripture read in the Divine Office for to-day. They also, and very appropriately, have a prominent place in the Office read on the feasts of martyrs through the year.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." "Yes," you may say, "certainly, if a man does endure and resist temptation, it is a good thing, and

one for which he has reason to be thankful; but for my part, I would rather get along without being tempted." This is a thought which is very likely to occur to those who are in earnest about saving their souls, and are therefore afraid that they may give way to temptation, commit mortal sin, and be lost. They are inclined to envy others who seem to have a good and innocent natural disposition, and sometimes they may, perhaps, wish that they themselves had died in their baptismal innocence, before temptation and sin were possible.

Now this wish is not altogether wrong; it is certainly pleasing to God for us to desire that it might be impossible to offend him, and that our own salvation might be made secure. But it is a mistake, when he does allow temptation to come on us without our fault, to think that it would be better for us if he had not done so.

It is a mistake, and why? Because far the greater part of us cannot acquire supernatural virtue in any high degree, give much glory to God, or be entitled to much reward at his hands, without a good deal of temptation. If it would please God to infuse all the virtues into our souls without any trouble or labor on our part, it might indeed be very well; but this he is not bound to do, and generally he does not choose to do it. He prefers that we should obtain our virtues partly by our own exertions. And as we will not pray or meditate, do penance or mortify ourselves enough to accomplish this end, there is no way to make any virtue strong and hardy in us except by forcing us to oppose its contrary vice. It is quite easy to seem very pleasant and good-natured when one has no crosses or provocations; but let a

sharp or insulting word be said, and it will soon be seen how much real patience there is in this seeming good-humor; perhaps passion will flame out all the more violently for being long in repose. But if one's patience is often tried, and stands the test by means of our own earnest struggles, it will become after a time something which we can really count on.

This, then, is one good in temptation, that it makes our virtue really strong and solid for future use. But another value of it is to enable us to make acts at the very moment which will have an eternal reward and merit, and which we should never make were we let alone. Let one be tempted by impure thoughts for a day, and faithfully resist them; in that day he will perhaps have done more to please God and obtain merit and glory in heaven than in a year of ordinary life.

So if temptation comes without our own fault, we may indeed rejoice and count ourselves blessed, as St. James says; for it is indeed an earnest of the crown of life which our tried and strengthened souls shall win, and which shall be decked with the innumerable gems which our battles with sin have merited. But let us not allow it to come by our fault, for then we cannot hope for a blessing with it. "Lead us not into temptation," we say every day; profitable as the contest may be to us, it would be presumption to offer ourselves to it, or to ask from God an opportunity for it. Let us wait till he chooses to call us to the strife, and then thank him for the trial which shall give us, with his help, the crown of life which he has promised to those who love him, and for his love hate and resist sin.

Fifth Sunday after Easter.

EPISTLE. *St. James i.* 22–27. Dearly beloved: Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if a man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he shall be compared to a man beholding his natural countenance in a glass. For he beheld himself, and went his way, and presently forgot what manner of man he was. But he that hath looked into the perfect law of liberty, and hath continued in it, not becoming a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work: this man shall be blessed in his deed. And if any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Religion pure and unspotted with God and the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation; and to keep one's self undefiled from this world.

GOSPEL. *St. John xvi.* 23–30. At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: Amen, amen I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name. Ask, and you shall receive: that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken to you in proverbs. The hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father. In that day you shall ask in my name: and I say not to you, that I will ask the Father for you. For the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the

world, and I go to the Father. His disciples say to him: Behold now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now we know that thou knowest all things, and that for thee it is not needful that any man ask thee. In this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

SERMON LXXIV.

SINS OF THE TONGUE.

And if any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain.—St. James i. 26.

My dear brethren, we see by these words that we have a rule by which to find out whether or not we deserve to be called sincere Christians or hypocrites. In order to be a sincere Christian, what has a man to do? He has to get control of himself; to get his soul and all that it can desire subject to the law of God; to get all pride, covetousness, lust, anger, envy, gluttony, and sloth under the control of his own will; to get that will subject to and one with the will of God; and, what is more, he must keep himself in this state of mind at least so far as to restrain himself from committing mortal sin and the graver venial sins if he desire sincerely to keep his soul well out of danger. He who acts thus is a truly good man, and that man's religion is not vain.

What is the first thing to be done to begin to live in this way? It is to examine and see in what way a man commits the greater number of sins. One will soon find that the tongue of man is the means by

which a man sins most frequently and in the most devilish manner. For, says St. James, "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity, . . . defileth the whole body, . . . being set on fire by hell." We see from this how dangerous to the soul is the tongue of man. As we do see this, are we not bound to keep in check, *at all costs*, this source of evil? Any one can see that, if he does not bridle his tongue, his religion is vain indeed. In fact, it is nothing but a merely outward show. It is hypocrisy of the worst kind. But what are the sins of the tongue we most often hear?

They are blasphemies, curses, and oaths; the retailing of our neighbors' faults with delight and evident pleasure; quarrels, bickerings, constant reproaches for faults that are past, gone, and even sincerely repented of long ago; immodest and impure conversations, with jokes and stories a heathen feels ashamed of; hints and little words that seem almost nothing, yet injuring seriously the reputation of some one, separating friends, and making even those near and dear to each other by every tie cold and distant for a long time, if not for the rest of their lives. God deliver us all from the evil tongue! It works in our very homes. The husband becomes by it bitterness and gall to his wife and family. The wife becomes a torture to husband and children. Both by it make home a curse instead of a blessing, and separate those of whom the word of God declares, "Whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder." Too often do we see sad examples of this kind. Too often do we find such a husband, who is like a roaring wild beast in his home, and a wife whose tongue once set going, even for a slight cause, is like a clock running down, or like the mill-

clapper, so often used as a figure of an unruly tongue. The bad tongue of a child is the ruin of all in the house. That child is a tale-bearer and a traitor against those who begot him. A detestable habit of the evil tongue is what the world calls "damning our neighbor with faint praise," or, in other words, praising him highly, even to the skies, and putting in a little word of evil that destroys him all the more surely. One will excuse himself by saying: "But, after all, I spoke well of him. It can't do any harm!" Yet he knows in his inmost soul he has ruined or seriously injured his neighbor. How would I feel if I were spoken of in this manner? is the question one should have asked himself before he said a word.

How common is it to find persons the moment they see anything wrong done by another or hear of it hurry in great glee to tell it at once! Do we not know, my dear brethren, that such a one is a scandalizer of men, and that the Christian rule requires us to be silent then under pain of sin? But the greater the evil done the more delighted are they to tell it. It should be just the other way. *Never* reveal to any one the sin of your neighbor, unless to save an innocent person or another from damage of some kind. This damage must be serious to oblige one to tell, even then, the sin of another, for he is equally obliged by God not to tell it under ordinary circumstances.

Remember, then, that no one can be a true Christian unless he keeps from these sins by bridling his tongue. Otherwise, as the text declares, "this man's religion is vain."

SERMON LXXV.

PERSEVERANCE IN PRAYER.

Yet if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, although he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend; yet because of his importunity he will rise; and give him as many as he needeth.—St. Luke xi 8.

Many people complain that their prayers are not heard. Again and again they have made some special requests for temporal, or it may be even for spiritual, blessings, and nothing seems to have come of these petitions. Others get what they ask for, but they are not so favored: and they almost make up their minds that it is of no use for them to pray. They think, perhaps, that they are too great sinners for God to hear them: or that they do not know how to pray right; or they are even tempted to believe that prayer is a mistake altogether; that God's will is not moved by it: that, if any one does seem to get anything by it, it is only by chance, and would have come without it just as well.

Now what can be the reason of the failure of these good people in prayer? Is it, perhaps, because what they asked was really an evil for them, and so God could not in mercy grant it, but had to give them something better instead, which they have not noticed? Or is it that they did not strive to do their best to win what they wanted also by their own exertions as well as by prayer: that they would not put their own shoulder to the wheel? If it was some virtue, such as charity or patience, that they were asking for, and meanwhile took no real pains to cul-

tivate and practise it, no wonder that God would not give it to them. Or, lastly, is the reason for their disappointment that they were praying for others whose will was obstinately set against their prayers? A mother prays for her son, and her prayers are heard, though they may not seem to be. Graces are granted to him, but he resists them. God has not promised to send them in such a torrent as to sweep away and break down all opposition, though he may yet do so, if she will only persevere.

Persevere! Ah! that word suggests what may be the real difficulty, the true reason for the seeming uselessness of so many good prayers. They are good as far as they go, but there are not enough of them. The effect that is to come of them is to come all at once; it is like the fall of a tree in the woods under the blows of the axe: the tree will come down, but not at the first, the second, the tenth, or perhaps even the hundredth stroke.

Yes, my brethren, our Lord could no doubt grant our prayers as soon as we made them, but he does not wish to do so. And I think we can see at least two reasons why he does not. First, if he grants what we ask at once we will go off with what he has given us, and have no more to say to him. And, strange to say, he enjoys our society; he has himself said his delight is to be with the children of men. So he keeps us around him, though it be only to tease, as a father would the children he loved, if he could not keep them any other way. And, secondly, he knows that it is good for us to be with him; and that every time we pray in earnest we come nearer to him, and our souls become stronger. So it is that, both for his own sake and for our good, he

sometimes will not grant our prayers unless we persevere in them for a very long while.

Our Lord has given us to understand this importance of persevering in prayer very plainly in the Gospel read on these days, called Rogation Days, between to-day and the Feast of the Ascension. He represents to us in the parable of this Gospel a man who has gone to bed, and is roused at midnight by a friend who wants to borrow some bread to set before an unexpected guest. He at first tells the disturber to leave him alone; he says that he cannot be bothered to get up at such an inconvenient time; he pretends to drop off asleep, and keeps his friend outside knocking and pounding for so long a time that he almost gives it up as useless. "Yet," says our Lord, "if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, although he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth."

This is the lesson, then, it may be, for those who have had no success at their prayers. They did well to begin, but they did not keep at it long enough. Let them go at it once again, and keep on. Let them ask, and keep asking, and they shall receive; let them seek long enough, and they shall find; let them keep knocking and making a disturbance, and at last the door shall be opened, and they shall obtain what they desire.

Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension.

EPISTLE. 1 *St. Peter iv.* 7–11. Dearly beloved: Be prudent, and watch in prayers. But before all things have a mutual charity among yourselves: for charity covereth a multitude of sins. Using hospitality one towards another without murmuring. As every man hath received grace, ministering the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the words of God. If any man minister, let it be as from the power which God administereth: that in all things God may be honored through Jesus Christ our Lord.

GOSPEL. *St. John xv.* 26–*xvi.* 4. At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: When the Paraclete shall come whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me. And you shall give testimony, because you are with me from the beginning. These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized. They will put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth a service to God. And these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things I have told you, that when the hour of them shall come, you may remember that I told you.

SERMON LXXVI.

AFTER A MISSION.

THERE is nothing, my dear brethren, which can give more joy and consolation both to pastor and people than a mission such as that which was closed last Sunday.

Thank God, there were many who had been living previously in sin, but who really turned from it then with their whole hearts, and who now have a happiness in those hearts to which they had long before been strangers This happiness ought to last all their lives. God means that it should; they can make it do so if they will.

But how will it be in fact; how is it too often, after such times of grace and fervor? We have had missions before, which really seemed as if they marked a new era in the history of our parish; but we look for their fruits now and find them only few and far between. Too many of those who made them went back a month or so afterward to the old ways of sin.

What was the reason that they did not persevere? Why was it that they had the same sad story to tell when they came back this time that they had a few years ago?

Was it that they never expected it to be otherwise? Perhaps so. Some Christians—shame to say it—seem to think that mortal sin cannot be avoided. Such do not really try to avoid it; how can they? How can any one seriously attempt what he believes to be impossible? No wonder that such as these fell; the

question is if indeed they ever arose. For how could they have made the purpose of amendment which a good confession requires? Let them understand, at least now, that it is possible to abandon mortal sin at once and for ever.

But was it, perhaps, that they thought they could keep the grace they had got by their own unaided strength; that they could fight the devil single-handed, or even that he would never trouble them much again? Ah! my brethren, if any of you thought that he made a terrible mistake. Satan does not give up the souls which he has once possessed so easily. He knows the advantage which all habits of sin give him, and he is going to make the most of them. He will surely attack you, and you are weak, while he is strong. If you undertake to fight him alone, you will go to the wall. You cannot conquer him unless God helps you.

But, after all, there are not many Catholics who do not know that it needs God's help to persevere. Oh! yes; almost every one will say, when asked after confession if he is going to avoid sin for the future, that he will, "with the help of God."

Well, then, what is the matter? If we know that we are in danger, and that we can escape from it, but only by God's help, why does not that help come and save us?

I will tell you why it does not. And to do so I have only to turn to the first words of to-day's Mass: "He shall call on me, and I will hear him; I will deliver him and glorify him."

That is the whole story. If we want God to deliver us, we must ask him to do it. In other words, if we wish to persevere, we must pray. If we do not go to

God to get the strength which we need, we must be without it.

The sinner who repents, and does not pray often and fervently afterward to keep the grace he has, being especially careful of his morning prayers; who does not, above all, make often the best of all prayers —that of again coming to the sacraments—is a fool, and the devil's laughing-stock.

The great majority of those who have been leading a bad life, and who abandon it at a mission, or at any other time, will not persevere unless they are willing to take the trouble to make frequent and earnest prayers, and to come to confession again within a month. That is simple fact; it is the teaching of experience, not mere guess-work. Are you, my friends, willing to take that trouble for your soul's sake, or do you prefer to fall as you have fallen before?

SERMON LXXVII.

BEARING WITNESS FOR OUR LORD.

And you shall give testimony, because you are with me from the beginning.—St. John xv. 27.

It might be asked, dear brethren, what need God has of *our* testimony, or why the creature should act the part of witness for the Creator? Certainly Jesus Christ needed not the testimony of men, but in his infinite goodness and wisdom he has seen fit to commit to each one of us a sublime and holy mission, none other than that of giving testimony of him before the world, for the sake of our fellow-

man. "You are," says St. Peter, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, that you may declare the virtues of him who hath called you out of darkness."

This, then, is our mission, to be witnesses for Jesus Christ; and to-day we are going to consider how we are fulfilling it. You know, brethren, with what a keen sense of criticism the world examines the testimony of those witnessing in behalf of others, and how it values their testimony in proportion to their uprightness and integrity. Well, so it is with regard to us and the testimony we are called upon to give of our Blessed Lord. We Christians are all on the witness-stand of this great world. To-day the unbelieving world is passing judgment upon our testimony, deciding whether it be for or against Jesus Christ; but, brethren, there will come a day when Christ himself will sit in judgment upon this same testimony and reward us accordingly.

Since, then, this our mission is so important, brethren, how are we to fulfil it? It seems to me in no better way than by leading truly Christian lives, and thus forcing the world to acknowledge that we are animated by the spirit of God. The early Christians brought the light of faith to thousands, not by preaching, but by the holiness of their lives; and so, when the pagans and infidels came in contact with them, they were forced to admire and exclaim, "Behold how these Christians love one another!" Would to God that the life and conduct of every Christian to-day could force a similar confession from the unbelievers of our time.

Indeed, brethren, all Christians of our day have a great mission to fulfil in this regard; but *we* especially, for the reason given by our Lord himself—

"because you are with me from the beginning." You, beloved brethren, who have had the faith from the beginning—from your earliest childhood—have a special reason why your testimony for Jesus Christ should never be failing. Has it ever been so? Have your virtuous lives and edifying example brought home the truths and beauties of the Catholic faith to those outside the church? I fear, brethren, the conduct of bad and negligent Catholics has kept back many from inquiring into the true faith. Such Catholics, wearing the livery of Satan, have given false testimony of God, and will have to render an account for it.

We can all of us, brethren, give testimony of Jesus Christ by every action of our lives. Parents can and should render this testimony by the good example they give their families, and the Christian solicitude they have for their spiritual welfare. Young men and women should give this testimony by the profession and practice of God's law and the church's precepts. Let the consideration, dear brethren, of this our high mission, our being called to give testimony of God, be the means of animating us to renewed fervor in the service of Jesus Christ.

SERMON LXXVIII.

THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Watch in prayers.—1 St. Peter iv. 7.

To-day is the Sunday of expectation, and it brings to our minds that upper chamber in Jerusalem.

where the little band of the chosen disciples of the Lord were gathered together waiting for the coming of the Holy Ghost. There were the eleven Apostles and the faithful women, and Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and his brethren. "All these," says the sacred chronicler, "were persevering with one mind in prayer." Hence the Epistle of to-day urges us to imitate them, and begins with the exhortation: "Dearly beloved, watch in prayers."

We too must watch and wait for the coming of the Holy Ghost. He has, indeed, already come into our souls in Holy Baptism, cleansing them from original sin and making them his temples. He has come again in Confirmation, with all the fulness of his sevenfold gifts, to make us strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Christ.

Yet he comes to us continually every day, knocking at the door of our hearts and begging for admittance. Every impulse of what is known as actual grace is from the Holy Ghost, and such graces we are receiving all the time, every hour of the day. We must therefore prepare ourselves for his coming, and when he has entered into our souls we must strive to keep him there. The Holy Ghost is the life of our souls. It is his constant presence and indwelling which is the state of grace which makes us pleasing to God. To obtain and to preserve this abiding presence of the Holy Ghost we must imitate the Apostles in their watchfulness and prayer. We must watch lest the time of temptation should find us unprepared and off our guard; we must pray that the Holy Ghost may come into our hearts, bringing with him ever richer treasures of divine grace; that he may take possession of our souls and make

them all his own ; that he may guide our minds, and with the fire of his love inflame our hearts to do his holy will in all things.

But we must first of all prepare for the Holy Ghost by cleansing our souls from sin. Where sin reigns the Holy Ghost can never dwell. The Apostles prepared for his coming by penance. To that upper chamber in Jerusalem came St. Peter, who had denied his Lord, St. Thomas, who had doubted his resurrection, and the others who had wavered in their faith, and, in the time of trial, had forsaken their Master and fled. But now they had been convinced of their error, and they came together with sorrow for their past unfaithfulness, and a full determination to lay down their lives, if need be, for him who had died for them. This is the spirit in which we should prepare for the Holy Ghost. If your hearts are defiled with mortal sin, delay not the time of penance. The Holy Ghost is ready to descend upon you. He only waits for you to do your part. Make ready, then, a place in your heart, that he may enter in and dwell there.

"O my dearly beloved brethren!" exclaims St. Gregory the Great, "think what a dignity it is to have God abiding as a guest in our heart! Surely, if some rich man or some powerful friend were to come into our house, we would hasten to have our whole house cleaned, lest, perchance, when he came in he should see anything to displease his eye. So let him that would make his mind an abode for God cleanse it from all the filth of works of iniquity."

"And they were persevering with one mind in prayer." Our prayer must be persevering if we would gain that which we desire. This is what our

Lord meant when he said that we ought always to pray and not to faint. Unless we persevere in prayer we shall without doubt faint by the way in the journey of life. And let us do as the Apostles did, join our prayers to those of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and we shall have a sure hope of obtaining what is most needful for us. Then, as the Holy Ghost once descended upon her, and wrought within her the Incarnation, so also will he come into our hearts, and make them the abode of the Holy Trinity. Then, if we listen to his blessed voice within us, we shall grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for the Holy Ghost will teach us all things, according to the promise.

Feast of Pentecost, or Whit-Sunday.

EPISTLE. *Acts ii.* 1–11. When the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in the same place: and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them cloven tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak. Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven. And when this voice was made, the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every one heard them speak in his own tongue. And they were all amazed and wondered, saying: Behold, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how have we every one heard our own tongue wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians; we have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.

GOSPEL. *St. John xiv.* 23-31. At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words. And

the word which you have heard is not mine, but the Father's who sent me. These things have I spoken to you, remaining with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you: not as the world giveth do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. You have heard that I have said to you: I go away, and I come again to you. If you loved me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father: for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass: that when it shall come to pass, you may believe. Now I will not speak many things with you. For the prince of this world cometh, and in me he hath not anything. But that the world may know that I love the Father: and as the Father hath given me commandment, so I do.

SERMON LXXIX.

THE HOLY GHOST IN THE CHURCH.

The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.—GOSPEL OF THE DAY.

ON the day which we now commemorate, my brethren, the Holy Ghost came down, as you know, on the little company of Christians assembled in the upper room at Jerusalem, to prepare them for the great combat in which they were about to engage against the devil for the conquest of the world. He came down upon them to make of them the church of God; to establish them in the truth, and to bring to their remembrance, as our Lord had promised,

the faith which they had received from his lips. He came to give them not only the knowledge but also the courage and strength which would be necessary for them to persevere, to resist and overcome all the attacks of the enemy, and to weather all the storms which heresy, infidelity, and worldliness were about to raise against the one true faith.

And he was to come, and has come, not only on them, but on those who have followed them as well, and for the same purpose. We have received him, and he abides in the Catholic Church to-day as he did in the times of the Apostles. The Holy Ghost is the life of the church; it is his presence which distinguishes her from the human institutions which have appeared in the world with her and have one by one sprung up and passed away. It is his abiding with her that makes her life perpetual, ever the same and ever new.

But how is the Holy Ghost in the Catholic Church? How is it that he is her life, and that he keeps now, as of old, in the one true body which all who will but clear the mists of prejudice from before their eyes can see is the one which Christ promised to form, and to which all his promises were made?

In the first place, the Holy Ghost is in the Catholic Church by the gift bestowed on the successors of the Apostles in the Apostolic See, of infallibility in teaching the faith. In this way the truth is sure to be kept in the world; it cannot fail to be taught, while the Vicar of Christ remains to teach it.

But it is not only in the Holy See that the Spirit of God abides. The bishops throughout the world also teach the faith by his help and guidance; and this help is also given to the clergy who assist them.

Nor does the work of the Holy Ghost stop here; he is also with the body of the faithful, enabling them also to recognize the truth when they hear it, and to distinguish it from error. "You have the unction from the Holy One, and know all things," says St. John; "I have not written to you as to them that know not the truth, but as to them that know it."

Yes, the Holy Ghost is throughout the church; he is her life, and is not only in her head, but also in her members. Were he not in the members, though the pope indeed should remain to teach the truth, the faithful would not have remained faithful or attentive to the truth which he would teach.

What a blessing, then, my brethren, is this light of the Holy Ghost, which is given in its measure to each one of us; which keeps us in the one fold, and which makes us, out of many, one body in Christ; which brings his words always to our minds, and which preserves us from the ever-changing doubt and confusion which is the lot of those who are separated from the one true church in which he dwells! Let us, then, preserve this unspeakable gift; let us not quench the Spirit of God within us. And how is it quenched? How do we lose the light of faith which he gives?

By sin, and never except by sin. Though instruction be indeed good and salutary, it is not the simple and the unlearned who lose the faith, but such as give ear to their passions, specially those of pride and impurity. All the heresies which have torn multitudes from the church of Christ have had their roots not so much in ignorance as in sin. "Keep yourselves," then, my brethren, as St. John warns you,

"from idols"; this is the only sure way to keep in yourselves the light of God.

SERMON LXXX.

THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

If any one love me he will keep my word, and my father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him; he that loveth me not, keepeth not my word.—GOSPEL OF THE DAY.

To-day, dear brethren, the church sends up her voice of praise for the coming of the Holy Spirit. On this day the Holy Ghost, the personal love of the Father and the Son, came upon the disciples in that upper chamber in Jerusalem, where they were gathered together in prayer awaiting the promise of the Father. He came upon weak and timid men, but when he had poured himself upon them behold we have the great Apostles, the teachers of the divine word, the fearless and untiring searchers after souls, the founders of the church.

Ah! what a change had been wrought in these timid followers of Jesus, who had fled from him in the hour of his need, and who, after his resurrection, lay hid with barred doors for fear of the Jews! Their fear and their weakness have disappeared, and the whole world is not large enough for the exercise of their zeal, nor less than the conversion of all nations the end of their noble ambition.

But, dear brethren, the self-same Holy Ghost, who brought about this change in the Apostles, comes to us, nay, abides in us, if we fulfil the condition our

Lord lays down—namely, that we love him. And he makes the test of our love the keeping of his word. If we love him the Father will love us, and the Father and the Son will come to us and make their abode with us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is our sanctifier. It is he to whom are ascribed the works of love. He dispenses the graces which the merits of Jesus Christ have won for us. He purifies from sin and unites our souls to God. He dwells in every one who is free from grievous sin, and by his light and strength he gives us help to overcome the temptations which assail us.

He is the Spirit of joy and sweetness, filling us with the fear of God, urging us on in the love of God, guarding us from the loss of God's friendship by the winning sweetness of his consolations. How greatly, then, should we love and adore the Holy Ghost, the third person of the Blessed Trinity! We should often call upon him and pray to him. We do not invoke the Holy Ghost enough. We pray to the Father and to the Son, and so indirectly honor God, the Holy Spirit; but we should pray more frequently to him directly. We should call upon him to give us, if we have it not, the grace of God, and to increase in us the fire of divine love that we may realize in ourselves the promise of the abiding of God in us by keeping his laws.

What folly it is for us to imagine that God can have a dwelling-place in our sin-stained soul! How can the Holy Spirit find pleasure in one who by mortal sin has made himself God's enemy; who has been guilty of a deliberate act of rebellion against his Maker and been unfaithful to or left unheeded his

own sweet drawing? Alas for us, if this Pentecost finds us in this awful state! Alas! if the voice of our conscience has been silenced; this day then brings no joy to us! The Holy Spirit has no abiding-place within our souls. We have not loved the Son because we have not kept his words: "He that loveth me not keepeth not my words." And because we have not loved him the Father and he will not come to us. The loving Holy Ghost is not master in our house; we have driven him out who was our best friend and thrown open the gate to our enemy. Will you remain thus, you who are in sin? Let not this day go by and to-morrow find you unrepentant. Grieve for your past offences, keep the law of God, and you shall have the fulness of the Holy Spirit.

SERMON LXXXI.

THE EASTER DUTY.

In this great feast and its octave, my dear brethren, we commemorate the last of all the wonderful events which brought the Christian religion into the world. To-day our Divine Saviour, having ascended into heaven, fulfilled his promise in the descent of the Holy Ghost upon his Apostles; to-day the Catholic Church was fully established, and given power to convert the world; to-day the order of things was begun which is to last to the end of time.

And with this octave closes, therefore, that especially holy part or season of the year which centres round the resurrection of our Lord, and which has, for most obvious reasons, been appointed as the time

in which every Christian is bound, under pain of mortal sin, to receive Holy Communion, or make, as we say, his Easter duty. Only one more week remains in which to attend to this most important of all the obligations of a Catholic, to fulfil this greatest precept of the positive Christian law.

Now, what is exactly this precept of the Easter duty? Strange to say, you will often find people who do not seem to have any clear idea about it at all, in spite of all that is said about it from the altar and in common catechisms and books of instruction. And yet it is very simple. It is just this: Every Catholic of sufficient age to receive Communion is bound to receive it on some day between the first Sunday of Lent and Trinity Sunday—that is, a week from to-day—inclusive; and it is very difficult for for any one to have any excuse from complying with this law.

The Easter duty, then, is not merely an obligation to receive once a year. A person may receive a hundred times in the year, and yet not make his Easter duty; just as one may hear Mass every day in the week, and yet not fulfil the precept of hearing Mass if he stays away on Sunday. Now this seems quite easy to understand; but there are people, and plenty of them, too, who will make a mission shortly before Lent, and then say at this time: "Oh! I went to Communion not very long ago; there is no need to go so soon again." They might as well say on Sunday, if they had heard Mass on Saturday: "I need not go to church to-day; it was only yesterday that I was there." The law of hearing Mass is not to hear it once a week, but to hear it on Sundays and holydays of obligation; so the law of Communion is

not to receive once or twice a year, but to receive at the time appointed. No other time will do.

But some may say: "I have not committed any mortal sin since my last confession; I am just as good as these people who are running to church all the time." Very good, perhaps you are; though it may be that Almighty God does not have so high an opinion of you as you seem to have of yourself. But it is not the question whether you are good or not; the law is not to confess mortal sin at Easter; far from it, one ought to have no mortal sin to confess, then or at any other time. No, the law is to go to Communion. One should get leave to do so, of course; but if you have no sin on your conscience, what is easier than to say so to the priest? You ought to be glad to be able to say it.

Do not, then, make the foolish excuse either that you have been to Communion at Christmas or thereabout, or that you have nothing to confess now. Come this week; if you put your Communion off one day beyond next Sunday you are guilty of breaking this law. If you are in mortal sin, get out of it by making a good confession and Communion; if you are not, do not fall into it by refusing to obey this most peremptory and most urgent command. Any one who has not received since Lent began, and refuses to do so on or before next Sunday, may, indeed, call himself a Catholic, but is not worthy of the name.

Trinity Sunday.

EPISTLE. *Rom. xi.* 33–36. O the depth of the riches, of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and recompense shall be made to him? For of him, and by him, and in him, are all things. To him be glory for ever. Amen.

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. xxviii.* 18–20. At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.

LAST GOSPEL. *St. Luke vi.* 36–42. At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given to you: good measure and pressed down, and shaken together and running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you shall measure it shall be measured to you again. And he spoke also to them a similitude: Can the blind lead the blind? do they not both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not above his master; but every one shall be perfect, if he be as his master. And why seest thou the mote

in thy brother's eye, but the beam that is in thy own eye thou considerest not? or how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull the mote out of thy eye, when thou thyself seest not the beam in thy own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast first the beam out of thy own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to take out the mote from thy brother's eye.

SERMON LXXXII.

THE DIVINE MAJESTY.

For of him, and by him, and in him are all things; to him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.—EPISTLE OF THE DAY.

TO-DAY, my dear brethren, the church, having completed the round of feasts and fasts which she began on Christmas, having brought to our remembrance our Lord's birth, his holy childhood, his ministry on earth, his Passion and death, his glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost as he had promised, finally brings us into the presence of the Being by whom all these wonderful works have been accomplished, and who is the sole object of our adoration, the ever Blessed Trinity, the three Divine Persons, the one God. She bids us contemplate, so far as it is possible for us, the great and ineffable mystery into the faith of which we have been baptized, and to join with the angels and saints in the canticles of heaven, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come."

"Of him, and by him, and in him are all things," says the Apostle, reminding us of this highest of all the teachings of the Christian faith. Of the Father

is the Son, and by the Son is the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and in whom is their life and mutual love. The distinction of the Divine Persons is thus intimated to us; but the Divine Nature is only one; of, by, and in that One are we and all things created.

We and all the world around us are of God; not part of him, nor born of him according to nature, nor proceeding from his substance, but still of him in that we owe our being entirely to him, who drew us from nothing by his almighty power. Nothing could ever have existed outside of God himself except through the wonderful, incomprehensible act of creation. From nothing, nothing of itself could come; all things are from and of God, who created them from nothing.

By his almighty power, then, we have been created, and by it now we are sustained. We could not live for a moment except by his continual support. It is only by his aid that we can draw a single breath, walk a single step, or perform the simplest act. The winds and the waters, and all the powers of nature, as we call them, are his powers, too, which he lends to us, and makes subservient to our use.

And in him we live and move and are. He is nearer to us than we to ourselves. It is not only that he makes us live; it is his life by which we live; our life comes from and belongs to his eternal life. The life of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is in himself; ours is in him.

To him, then, the one and only true God, "be glory," as the Apostle says, "for ever and ever." How often we say these words, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,"

and how little do we think of what they mean! If all that we are and have is from God, by him and in him, how can we set ourselves apart from him, or claim anything for ourselves against him? How can we glory in ourselves, or desire glory from others, when all glory, praise, and honor belong of necessity to him from whom, by whom, and in whom all things are?

For this is what it means when we say, "Glory be to God." Not some glory or praise or recognition of his greatness from us, as a sort of tax or tribute which we must pay to keep the rest for ourselves. No, when we have given glory to God as we should, there will be nothing left for us to keep. This is the perfection of the creature, to prostrate itself at the foot of its Creator's throne, and to cast all the crowns it has received before him that sitteth thereon, and to say with the angels and saints in heaven, "Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power, because thou hast created all things, and for thy will they were and have been created."

SERMON LXXXIII.

THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

"Go ye, therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.— St. Matt. xxviii. 19.

It was the faith in the Most Holy Trinity that the Apostles were sent forth to teach throughout all the world to every creature. It is into this faith that

every Christian is baptized by the invocation of the thrice-holy name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and because of this baptism he is bound to persevere all his life long in that steadfast faith in the Holy Trinity for which the church to-day teaches us to pray. Think it not strange that this doctrine should be so deep a mystery. We are surrounded on all sides by mysteries. There is scarcely a department of knowledge into which we can turn our minds where we are not met by things which we cannot understand. There is, therefore, nothing wonderful in the fact that God is the greatest mystery of all. We cannot solve the mysteries of nature and of life as we see them before us. How, then, can we expect to comprehend the nature and the inner life of God? It is not for us, with our poor, feeble minds, to ask the how or the why, but simply to bow down in humble adoration before the truth of God as he has revealed himself to us. Faith would not be the virtue that it is if everything were perfectly plain to us. The chief merit of faith is in accepting on God's authority that which is beyond our own reason. His revelation of himself to us is only partial. The full light that we are capable of receiving will not come until we are before his throne, and see him face to face, for it is only when that which is perfect shall come that that which is in part shall be done away. For now we see, as it were, through a glass, in an obscure manner, now we know but in part, but then we shall know even as we are known. Meanwhile our time of trial remains, and we must submit our minds as well as our hearts and wills to God.

But he has not given us this partial revelation of himself in order to perplex and worry us. He has

told us all that is good and needful for us to know in our present state. We should not, therefore, fix our minds upon that which he has chosen to hide from us, but upon that which he actually has revealed to us, and we shall find in this more than enough for our love and devotion. Each Person of the Blessed Trinity has some special relation to us, and there are, therefore, special acts of love and adoration which we can pay to each. He has revealed himself to us as the Father, not only as the Father of the Eternal Son, but as our Father as well; our Father, because he has adopted us as his children. Nothing that we know on earth of a father's love can compare with the tenderness with which the Eternal Father regards his children. We, therefore, must become as little children towards him, looking up to him with love, with reverence, with simple trust, striving to fulfil his holy will in perfect obedience, knowing that he wills only our good, here and hereafter.

God the Son has revealed himself to us as our Saviour and Redeemer, and because we are through him the children of God, as our Elder Brother, sharing in our human nature, having been tempted like us, and having suffered far more for our sake than we shall ever be called upon to suffer for him. Hence in all our trials, in all our temptations, in all our sufferings, we have his example to cheer us, knowing that we are but treading the steps that he trod and bearing our cross after him. His Precious Blood is still flowing through the sacraments to cleanse us from our sins, his grace is ever ready to help us in the hour of need.

And God the Holy Ghost is revealed to us and given to us as the life of our souls, our helper, our

comforter, our sanctifier, stirring up the flame of divine love in our hearts, urging us to good deeds, and giving us the strength to perform them. We, on our part, must listen to his voice and follow his guidance, that so we may abide in the love of the Father and of the Son.

Thus is the Blessed Trinity revealed to us, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Let us not question, but praise, adore, and love.

SERMON LXXXIV.

THE DIVINE JUDGMENT.

And Jesus coming, spoke to them, saying: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth." —MATT. xxviii. 18.

WHEN these words were uttered by our Lord he had risen from the dead. On this occasion he had with him only the eleven Apostles, whom he had instructed to meet him by appointment at this time and in this place—a mountain in Galilee. A few words they are, but full of meaning. The Apostles saw our Lord in the flesh again; they heard his own human lips utter this truth: that all power is his in heaven and in earth.

How did they understand him? They understood that the Man they saw, the human being who then stood before them, was endued with all power that God would exercise in heaven and in earth; that to rule this vast universe was his right; that to sit on the throne of heaven, to be worshipped and adored as God by every creature, to shape the destiny

of this world, of its many nations, of its many families, of every single soul born and to be born in it; to open and shut the gates of hell at his own will, to judge all without exception, each separately at the moment after death, and all together in the great Judgment day of God, is his right and office as the Man, because he is Man in God and God in Man; the Man selected to be the One through whom the Divine Nature manifests himself in all the fulness of the Godhead in human nature.

But what, therefore, is the first thought that must enter our hearts? It is necessarily this: How will that Man receive us when we are called into his presence, one by one, as we leave this world? How will that countenance look to us at that moment? How will those ears listen to our reports of our own lives? How will those lips speak to us in that dread moment?

But why do we ask ourselves these questions? Because we know that we are to meet that Man in God, face to face, to give an exact account of all of our deeds in the body, and that he is the One to praise or blame us, reward or condemn us, receive us into eternal blessedness or cast us out into eternal, never-ending darkness, and deliver us over to the rule of those who shall be our masters in hell.

Can we tell what the result will be? Yes; and to a certainty! If our lives have been good, or if we die in his friendship, the Man Christ Jesus will give us a blessed and glorious welcome; but if our lives have been wicked, that Man will reject us for ever. He will not have us anywhere near him. He will not endure our presence a single moment, nor permit us to speak in his presence, nor ever again to

mention his holy name, but will cast us into that region of creation where holy names are not permitted to be uttered.

Do we truly hope that this sad fate will not be ours? Then we are truly good, leading good lives, are faithful to our duties as good Catholics. If we truly hope for his approval we can judge ourselves now and know we shall receive it.

How is this? If each one can say to-day, the last of the Easter-time, I have obeyed the commands of the church and made my Easter duty, then each soul is free from mortal sin and knows the judgment of our Lord will be in his favor. Let any such soul die at any moment now and the mercy of God is surely his, for he is now in the friendship of God, his soul is restored to its heavenly state, and every soul in this state is so acceptable to our Lord that he cannot condemn it, but must welcome it to the society of those who are saved for ever.

O unfaithful, negligent Catholic! whose life heretofore has been a dishonor to God, a shame to your family, a scandal to your neighbor, and a disgrace to the church of Jesus Christ, have you turned from your sins and made your peace with God this Easter-time? Have you washed your past life clean from sin by this Easter duty? Then you, too, *know* you will receive the welcome of our Lord, the Man Christ Jesus, your King and your God. Otherwise you are still his enemy, and have a right only to his eternal wrath. How can you sleep a moment or be at rest a single instant longer while knowing you are condemned already, because you have not made your Easter duty?

Second Sunday after Pentecost,

and Sunday within the Octave of Corpus Christi.

Epistle. 1 *St. John iii.* 13–18. Dearly beloved: Wonder not if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not, abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer. And you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself. In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. He that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother in need, and shall shut up his bowels from him: how doth the charity of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

Gospel. *St. Luke xiv.* 16–24. At that time: Jesus spoke to the Pharisees this parable: A certain man made a great supper, and invited many. And he sent his servant at supper-time to say to them that were invited that they should come, for now all things are ready. And they began all at once to make excuse. The first said to him: I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee, have me excused. And another said: I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them; I pray thee, have me excused. And another said: I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant returning, told these things to his lord. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant: Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the feeble, and the blind and the lame. And the

servant said : Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said to the servant : Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. But I say unto you that none of those men that were called shall taste my supper.

SERMON LXXXV.

HOLY COMMUNION.

A certain man made a great supper and invited many.—St. Luke xiv. 16.

I suppose every Catholic here to-day, except some young children, has once or many times in his life been to the "Great Supper," and eaten the "Bread of Life" which is served at it ; and those little ones of the Lord's Holy Catholic family are looking forward to the bright day, to be for ever afterwards the day of sweetest memory, when they too shall have that honor and happiness—the day of their First Communion.

If such be the case, what is the use of the church repeating to us every year the threat in the Gospel against those who made foolish and selfish excuses for staying away—"None of those men that were called shall taste of my supper"? We have been called. We have answered the invitation. We have been to the supper. Isn't that enough ? The Gospel evidently does not apply to us. But wait a bit. I have two things for you to think about. In the first place, the calling to the Great Supper the Gospel speaks about is a standing invitation for life. By this I mean that the law of the Catholic Church

obliges every one to receive Holy Communion annually—that is, during the Easter season. It is then, first of all, an *annual* invitation; and going one year is not answering the call for the next year. Every one who has learned his Catechism ought to know that. In the second place, what would you think of a near relative whom you had invited to be present at your marriage anniversary dinner, who should send for reply that he had already dined with you on the Fourth of July? This is like what people say who, when asked if they made their Easter duty, tell you, "Oh! no, I went at Christmas," or "I was at the mission." Now the *annual* marriage supper which the King makes for his Son, and to which we are invited, is at Easter, and neither Christmas, mission time, the Forty Hours', nor the Fourth of July will do, unless, indeed, the mission or the Forty Hours' took place in the Paschal season.

The second thing I want you to think about is that the invitation to partake of the "Great Supper" of Holy Communion, whether at Easter or at any other time, is a call to make what is known as a *worthy* Communion; that is, you must be absolved from sin and thus be yourself worthy. That is requisite, and that is enough. There are some scrupulous people who fancy that they themselves have got to do beforehand all that the Communion is intended to do and will do. Who is it that prepares the Supper, they or the Lord? If they will do the little that is asked of them, they can safely leave to the Lord the responsibility of doing his part. A *worthy* Communion should also be one that is worth something to the one receiving it, and should not be a worthless exterior performance, which has no in-

terior act of communion in the heart to correspond to it. And now this kind of worth of each and every Communion depends upon what the communicant chooses to make it. All is to be had that God can give. The means of getting the good from Communion is one and the same means for getting the good in receiving other sacraments—that is, prayer. Prayer beforehand, prayer during it, prayer afterwards. The more you want and the more you ask of, the more worth will your Communion be. Suppose our Lord should suddenly quit the sacramental form of the host and ask a communicant at the altar-rail, "What do you wish for?" and he should answer, "I don't know; I never thought of asking for anything," you would reasonably conclude that he was not likely to receive very much. Now, I hope you who often come to the holy table are paying attention to this. If you come often, it is supposed, and justly supposed, that you want a good deal, and that you are deeply in earnest about obtaining what you desire. Much as, I am sure, your Communions are worth to you, I wish you would set about making them worth still more. In a word, you must think more about what you need. Get your requests ready. Have them, as it were, well by heart, so that if the Lord should ask you what you came for, your reply would come out quick and earnest enough. Of all privileges and honors in this world, receiving Holy Communion is, indeed, something for us Catholics to boast of. How the "outsiders" envy us our faith and the comfort it brings to us!—the infidels of every name and kind, the Protestants and others, who either have no Communion, or at best a sham one. How would you like

to have yourself thrust aside and one of them called by the Lord to take your place at his table? Beware, then, how you treat his invitation; come as often and be as well prepared as the Spirit of Divine Love shall inspire you.

SERMON LXXXVI.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

THE month of June has, as you know, my brethren, been set apart by general consent for devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as that of May has in the same way been devoted to our Blessed Lady; and on next Friday, the day following the octave of Corpus Christi, the church solemnly celebrates the Feast of the Sacred Heart. This feast, formerly observed only in some places, has for about thirty years been kept everywhere.

As the devotion to the Sacred Heart has of late spread so widely in the church, and is so plainly pleasing to God and most salutary to us, it is well that we should understand it clearly, that we may enter into it more fully. In the first place, then, we will ask, What is the nature of the worship which we render to the Sacred Heart of Jesus? And, secondly, Why is it specially selected as the object of our devotion?

What, then, is the nature of our worship of the Sacred Heart? It is, of course, the same as that which we pay to our Lord himself—that is, the worship which is due to him as God the Son, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. His human nature,

united to the divine nature in one Person, is truly worthy of divine worship and honor. God, having become man, his human heart is the heart of God, and must be adored as such. Let us, then, remember this: the devotion to the Sacred Heart is one that is given to God himself, just as that is which we have for the Blessed Sacrament in which he resides on our altars.

But why do we select the Heart of our Lord, or rather why has he himself selected it, as a special object of our adoration? I say, why has he himself selected it? for this devotion to the Sacred Heart in modern times is due specially to a revelation made by our Lord to the Blessed Margaret Mary, a nun of the Visitation, two centuries ago.

In answer to this question we may say that our Lord's Heart is the fountain of his Precious Blood, which was shed for our salvation, and was pierced by the lance, like his hands and feet by the nails, on the cross; and it is in this way specially pointed out as the object of our gratitude and love. But even a more urgent reason is that the heart is a natural symbol of love, agreed on by universal consent at all times and in all parts of the world, and therefore that the Heart of Jesus most perfectly represents his love for us. In adoring the Sacred Heart, then, we adore in a particular manner the love of Christ for sinners; and it is for this reason that he has given us this devotion, knowing that it is only by the thought of the love of his Heart for us that our hearts can be won to the love of him.

Yes, my brethren, God wishes our love; it was to obtain it that he became one of us and died for us on the cross; and it is to win it now that he asks us

to remember and to adore his Sacred Heart. "Let us therefore," says St. John, "love God, because God first hath loved us." This is the spirit of this devotion: that we should not try to save our souls merely for the fear of hell, but that, seeing how much God has loved us, we should love him in return. And also that, seeing how much he has loved our brethren, the same fire of divine charity may be kindled in our hearts, and thus each one of us may do our share to carry on and to complete the work for which he shed his Precious Blood: the bringing of the world to the knowledge and love of him.

SERMON LXXXVII.

INGRATITUDE.

A certain man made a great supper, and invited many. . . . And they began all at once to make excuse.—GOSPEL OF THE DAY.

You know, my dear brethren, the parable given by our Divine Lord in the Gospel of to-day. The principal point of it is in the words which you have just heard. The guests who were invited to the supper, instead of feeling honored by the invitation and accepting it gladly, began to make one excuse or another; one had his farm, one his oxen, and another had just married a wife. None of these reasons would have prevented them from coming to the supper had they really wished to; they were mere flimsy pretexts put forward to hide their indifference to their host and to all that he had to offer them.

You know this parable, and I think you also know well its meaning. As our Saviour uttered it the

coldness and ingratitude of those whom he had come to save rose up before him, giving him a foretaste of the agony which was afterward to overwhelm and crush him in the garden of Gethsemani. His heart, burning with love for men, longed and thirsted for love in return; it was all he asked; could he but have had that all the pains of his sorrowful life and terrible death would have been as nothing. But no; he foresaw that, after all, those to whom he stretched out his arms on the cross in loving invitation would, for the most part, turn a deaf ear to his appeal; would give him at the best but a reluctant and half-hearted service; would keep as much as possible for themselves, and give as little as possible to him.

And, in particular, he foresaw that the crowning gift which he had in store for his rebellious and ungrateful children—his own Body and Blood, which he was to leave them in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and in which he was to remain with them even after his work was done and the time come for him to return to his Father—would be rejected by the greater part even of Christians with the same indifference with which his other sacrifices were to be met. He saw himself in our churches, unwelcomed and almost unknown by the most of those whom he loved to call his friends. He saw that, though for a time in the first fervors of faith, when the sword of persecution drove those to his side who were not overcome by it, he would, as he desired, indeed be the daily bread of his people, yet there would come a day when that faith would be dimmed, and the love which sprang from it would grow cold. He knew that an age would come when—shame to say it—his church would have to force her children by strict laws and

threats of excommunication to receive him in the sacrament of his love even once a year. And he knew that, in spite of all this urging, many still would excuse themselves from the divine banquet, offered so freely to, nay, almost forced upon, them; that millions every year would miss their Easter duty; would either turn from the bread of life to the food of swine by deliberate choice, or at least would, on some frivolous pretext, put off the time of their reconciliation till the last day appointed for it had gone by.

Alas! my dear brethren, children of this God and Father who has done so much for us, I fear that some even of you who hear my words have once more thus grieved his heart and despised his love. In all this long time of Lent and Easter which has just gone by you have missed the duty to which the most sacred and solemn of all the laws of the church has called you. But still our Lord has not yet treated you as you have treated him. He has not yet said to you, as the host said in the parable: "None of you that were invited shall taste of my supper." No; once more, in this great festival of Corpus Christi, he makes yet another appeal to you, to put aside your excuses, and to come to him with all your heart and soul. Do not, I beseech you, continue to insult and despise him who thus humbles himself before you, and still tries to remind you of his goodness and mercy. Come to him without delay, and make amends for your past neglect; all will be forgiven and forgotten. But remember, if tempted to reject him once more, and to postpone your return, that even his infinite mercy will at last have to yield to his justice; that his loving Spirit cannot strive with you for ever.

Third Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. 1 *St. Peter v.* 6–11. Dearly beloved. Be you humbled under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation. Casting all your solicitude upon him, for he hath care of you. Be sober and watch; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith: knowing that the same affliction befalleth your brethren who are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, when you have suffered a little, will himself perfect, and confirm, and establish you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

GOSPEL. *St. Luke xv.* 1–10. At that time: The publicans and sinners drew near unto Jesus to hear him. And the Pharisees and the Scribes murmured, saying: This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spoke to them this parable, saying: What man among you that hath a hundred sheep: and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, doth he not lay it upon his shoulders rejoicing: and coming home call together his friends and neighbors, saying to them: Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost. I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance. Or what woman having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle and sweep the house and seek diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, call together her

friends and neighbors, saying: Rejoice with me, because I have found the groat which I had lost. So I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance.

SERMON LXXXVIII.

SINFUL AMUSEMENTS.

Be sober and watch, because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he may devour.—EPISTLE OF THE DAY.

I NEED not tell you, dear brethren, that there is nothing more contrary to the spirit of our holy religion than melancholy. The church would not have her children long-faced and mopish, eschewing all pleasure as a thing sinful; nor would she have them unhappy by depriving them of what is good and forbidding what is innocent, but like a wise mother she permits, nay, sanctions, harmless amusements, knowing that this, far from being an impediment to us in our efforts after holiness, is rather a help.

But, unfortunately, all pleasures are not innocent. There are some which are sinful—very sinful—and which, instead of aiding us by begetting a holy gladness, fill us with remorse and rob the soul of the grace of God, which is the principle of all our joy. Such pleasures as these the church forbids; such as these she would have us avoid, and she warns us that they come not from God, but from our adversary the devil, who is seeking our ruin. It is with regret that we say it, still we say it with truth, that of late years a very dangerous sort of amusement has taken more

or less hold upon numbers of our young people, and, now that we are at the beginning of summer, it may not be amiss to say a word or two about a certain sort of "picnics."

It is hard to conceive how a young man or woman, who wishes to be deemed respectable, or even to preserve self-respect, can attend any of those *moonlight* gatherings known as picnics, festivals, etc. Call them by what name you please, as a whole they are bad. The places where these meetings are held, the persons whom you cannot avoid coming in contact with, make them dangerous at least, and very frequently a real occasion of sin. How can a young girl know the character of him with whom she is dancing? She has been introduced, to be sure, but what of that? Does she feel quite certain that she may not be subjected to insult or worse? Is she satisfied that her mother would be pleased to see her with her present companions? Is she not engaged in a dance which borders on immodesty? Take care, my good girl, you have taken your first downward step to-night; retrace your way, and never be found at such a "festival" as this again, if you value your good name. Nor can young men attend these "moonlight rural gatherings" without endangering their fair fame and interests. A pure woman will not marry a man who consorts with bad characters. She will not trust herself to the tender mercies of one who reaches home in the early morning in a half or wholly drunken state. She cannot look forward to a happy life with one of this character, and she will not encourage his attentions. Employers are not over-anxious to have in their service those who come to their occupations with evident marks of debauch-

ery. They believe that young men of this sort are not efficient, and they believe so rightly ; they think that these are not altogether trustworthy ; that they are constantly exposing themselves to danger and theft. It does not pay, young men, to go to "moonlight picnics." It is not to your interest, either temporal or spiritual. Do not be carried away with the idea that you can be dissipated with impunity. "Be sober and watch" yourselves, remembering that a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and certainly to be preferred to the gross pleasures of moonlight orgies.

SERMON LXXXIX.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

Casting all your solicitude upon him, for he hath care of you.—1 St. Peter v. 7.

The doctrine of God's providence is one of those great truths which, though accepted by every Christian, are often not apprehended practically in every-day life. By the providence of God we mean that loving care which he takes of all his creatures, and especially of man, ruling, guiding, and protecting them, "ordering all things sweetly," as holy Scripture has it, that each one of his creatures may attain to the end for which it was given existence.

God's work does not stop with creation. It would be absurd to suppose that he made all things and then left them to take care of themselves. On the contrary, we know that his sustaining power is ne-

cessary in order to keep us in existence at all, and that if he were to withdraw his sustaining hand from us we should at once fall back into the nothingness from whence we came. But God's providence over us means something far more than simply keeping us alive. It enters into every circumstance of our life. Whatever befalls us, day by day, is with his permission, is in accordance with his holy will. Whether he blesses us or smites us, it is all the same: everything comes from his loving providence, and is intended for our good.

Our Lord's teaching concerning the providence of God is very clear and plain. He tells us that God cares for the lilies of the field and for the birds of the air, so that not one of them is forgotten before God; and, he adds, "Are not you of much more value than they?" For "even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." "O ye of little faith!" he still says to us, "why are you so slow and dull of heart to understand? Why will you not see the hand of God directing the whole course of your life?" Men go on in their carelessness, unmindful of God, taking the good things that come to them as a matter of course, or as the result of their own labor, forgetting that every good and perfect gift is from above. But God does not forget *them*. In spite of their indifference, he still watches over them, providing them with all things needful for their souls and bodies, and with his grace ever seeking to lead them to him. How many, too, spend their time in foolishly worrying over their petty trials! It is all owing to a lack of faith; they refuse to recognize God's hand in their daily life. Yet again and again our Lord and his Apostles repeat the exhortation,

"Be not solicitous"—that is, do not worry—"casting all your solicitude upon him, for he careth for you."

But it is especially in the great trials of life that the doctrine of God's providence is necessary for us, and full of consolation, and perhaps it is at just such times that it is the most often forgotten. When some heavy trouble comes how often does the sufferer fail to acknowledge that it is sent by Almighty God—that is, an ordering of his providence, and therefore to be submitted to with patience and humility. "Dearly beloved," says St. Peter in the Epistle of to-day, "be you humbled under the mighty hand of God." To be humble is to acknowledge our true position in God's sight, to confess that we are his creatures altogether in his power, and that he has the right to do with us as he pleases. Our faith assures us that he will not use this right to our disadvantage. Away, then, with all silly murmurings and complaints that God is unjust. Good sense alone will teach that that cannot be. If you understood the full extent of the malice of even venial sin you would see that you receive but a small part of what you really deserve. Follow, then, the counsel of Solomon, and "reject not the correction of the Lord, and faint not when thou art chastised by him; for whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth."

But if the burden seem too hard for you to bear alone, Jesus is ready to help you. "Come to me," he says, "all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." Go to him in the Blessed Sacrament, pour out your grief to the Sacred Heart, and you shall find rest for your soul. "Cast thy care upon the Lord," said David in the Psalms, "and

he shall sustain thee." Then, having humbled yourself under the mighty hand of God, he will exalt you in the time of his visitation and fill you with his peace. And "the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, *when you have suffered a little*, will himself perfect, and confirm, and establish you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

SERMON XC.

HOW TO BEAR BURDENS.

Cast thy care upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee.—GRADUAL OF THE MASS.

WHICH of us, dear brethren, is without his burden or his care? Whatever our station in life, however high or lowly we may be, to each comes his portion of sorrow, to each come difficulties and temptations. If we escape one trial we are sure to find another, and probably a worse one, awaiting us. It is our lot here upon earth to suffer, and we ought to expect nothing else, for if we hope for perfect happiness in this world we are doomed to bitterest disappointment. The way in which to carry ourselves with regard to our difficulties is not to seek to avoid them, or when they come upon us to run away from them, but to accept them as the portion of our heritage and to make them a source of merit and sanctification. If we would but cast our care upon the Lord, if we would but willingly submit to what his all-wise providence designs for us, these apparent miseries would become for us real blessings and bring upon us the choicest

of God's gifts—an increase of his holy grace in our souls. God will help us sustain our burden if we receive it with resignation; if we love it he will make it even sweet to bear.

But, you may say, this doctrine is very pretty in theory. How about the practice of it? It is not so easy to be indifferent to the things of this life, to the wants of the body, so as to be quite as willing to be poor as to be rich, to have a good, substantial meal or a morsel of cold victuals. People cannot be expected to prefer misery to happiness.

We are not asking you to prefer misery to happiness, nor even to be indifferent as to what shall happen you. Although this would be far more perfect and would soon make him who had such disposition very holy, still we do not ask so much. What we would wish you to do is what we think all are bound to do—namely, to have confidence in the providence of God; to recognize his hand guiding the course of events in our behalf. We know that he is good and merciful and ready to help us in our need; we know that even when he punishes it is not so much in anger as in love that he does so; yet we complain and are discontented, and some even go so far as to blaspheme the God who, at the very moment when we are treating him with such indignity, is lovingly working all things together unto good, who is doing for them more than they would ever hope for.

Oh! what pride is theirs, who set up their judgment against God's and insist upon the Almighty doing things according to their fancy. They see no reason why they should suffer this or that. Why should they be treated so harshly? Other people have comfort; why should not they? Oh! what

folly, what blindness is there in the hearts of men and women who speak thus! What ingratitude is theirs! Perhaps the God they are abusing has forgiven them hundreds of mortal sins; perhaps he is withholding what they are demanding because he sees if he granted them the things they ask their salvation would be endangered; yet all that he is doing in loving kindness is being misunderstood, because men are unwilling to bow down to the holy and adorable will of God.

Dear brethren, let it not be said of us that we are ingrates or that we are so foolish as to think ourselves wiser than God; but let us turn to him with all our hearts and recognize in all he sends us his unspeakable mercy; let us ever see in him the All-wise God, our Father, and never permit ourselves to be deceived by the rebellion of our lower nature. Let us, in a word, "cast all our care upon the Lord."

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. *Rom. viii.* 18–23. Brethren: I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us. For the expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him that made it subject, in hope: because the creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that every creature groaneth, and is in labor even till now. And not only it, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

GOSPEL. *St. Luke v.* 1–11. At that time: When the multitudes pressed upon Jesus to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Genesareth. And he saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And going up into one of the ships that was Simon's, he desired him to thrust out a little from the land. And sitting down, he taught the multitudes out of the ship. Now when he had ceased to speak, he said to Simon: Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering, said to him: Master, we have labored all the night and have taken nothing: but at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes, and their net was breaking. And they beckoned to their partners that

were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking; which when Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken. And so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. And Jesus saith to Simon: Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt be taking men. And when they had brought their ships to land, leaving all things, they followed him.

SERMON XCI.

HOW TO SUFFER.

Brethren: I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.—EPISTLE OF THE DAY.

I THINK, my brethren, that there are few good and faithful Christians who do not have, as they journey through life, a fair share of crosses, trials, and sufferings. Sometimes these crosses are not noticed much by other people, but they are heavy enough for those who have to bear them. The priest hears more of the troubles of the world, as well as of its sins, than any one else; misery is a very old story to him; and he has his own trials, too, in plenty, though many think that in his state of life he has mostly avoided them. Yes, trouble and suffering seem to be, and indeed they really are, the rule of life for Christians, happiness rather the exception; unless we are willing to get what some call happiness by disregarding the law of God.

Now this is a very unpleasant fact; but it is a fact, and we have to accept it. But how shall we best do so? That is a point which it will be well to consider.

Shall we simply take our trouble because we cannot help it, and fret as little as we can, because fretting only makes it worse? Or shall we take comfort by thinking that others are in the same plight as ourselves; by believing, though perhaps we cannot see it, that our luck, though hard, is not harder than that of most of those around us?

These would be two pretty good ways of getting along for one who had no better. But it would be a shame for us to fall back on them. One who has faith should be able to find a better way than either of these.

"Yes," you may say, "I know what you mean; a Christian ought to be resigned to God's holy will. We are taught and we believe that all things come to us by the providence of God; that he is all-wise and infinitely good; so, when he sends us anything hard to bear, we must say, 'Thy will be done,' and know by faith that it is for the best."

Now I do not want to say anything against this way of bearing trouble; it is a good way, and it is a Christian way; none more so. And perhaps sometimes it is the only one that will seem possible. But after all it is not exactly what I mean, or it is not at any rate all that I mean; and it is not what the great Apostle St. Paul, whose glorious and triumphant death, after a life of suffering, we commemorate with that of St. Peter to-day, meant in those immortal words which I just read.

"I reckon," says he, "that the sufferings of this

present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us."

That is his consolation. "We have," he says to us, "a little to suffer here, but what is it after all? A drop, bitter it is true, but still only a drop, against an eternal torrent of joy with which God is going to overwhelm our souls. Truly it is not worthy to be compared in its passing bitterness to the ocean of delight of which it is the earnest for the future. It is, in fact, the little price which we have to pay for that future; and it is not worth speaking of when we think what it will bring."

Indeed, my brethren, it must be a matter of astonishment to the angels, it ought to be so to us, that we think so little of the heaven which God has prepared for us. We profess to believe in it; we do believe in it; but we seem to forget all about it. We can have it if we will; moreover, these very crosses and trials, if we have them, are a sign that our Lord means almost to force it on us. Let us, then, think more of heaven; meditate on it, look forward to it. The thought of heaven was the joy and strength of the martyrs; why should it not be the constant support of ordinary Christians, too?

SERMON XCII.

GOOD WORKS DONE IN MORTAL SIN.

Master, we have labored all the night, and have taken nothing.—GOSPEL OF THE DAY.

THE Gospel of to-day tells us, my dear brethren, how St. Peter and his companions, after wearying themselves with dragging their heavy nets the whole

night, had caught nothing for all their pains; and how, as soon as our Lord appeared, and they were able to work with his guidance and help, they took more fish than their boats would hold.

There is a most important spiritual lesson contained in this simple story. This miraculous draught of fish is, as it were, a parable, acted out instead of told by our Divine Saviour. And its meaning is this: that those who work in the night of the soul which is caused by mortal sin have indeed much trouble, sorrow, and labor, but it is all for nothing. All that they do and suffer while remaining in this state counts for nothing in their favor in the eternal account of God. Whereas, on the other hand, the slightest action of one who is in the state of grace, and who, therefore, works in union with Christ, has attached to it a great and imperishable glory in the kingdom of heaven.

St. Paul also teaches us this quite explicitly. "If I should distribute," says he, "all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity" (that is, the love of God, which makes the state of grace), "it profiteth me nothing." Whereas, on the other hand, he says, for himself and others who are united to God by grace, that "what is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."

This is, I say, my brethren, a most important truth. Do you fairly understand it? Do you take in its full meaning and application? Let us look at and study it as much as possible in these few minutes; then let us take it home with us, meditate on it, and make it thoroughly our own.

All of us have our labors, trials, and pains; some are heavily burdened with them. To work and to suffer is the lot of all, from which there is no escape. We cannot avoid our destiny; we must make the best of it.

Yes, that is just it; we must make the best of it; if we have any prudence, any true love or care for our happiness, we will make the best of it, and not the worst. Why suffer this poverty, this sickness, this worry and distress of mind? Why do all this hard work? Why go through all these long and weary days, and get nothing in reward for all our labor and suffering but the mere means with which to keep up this painful and toilsome life, and to sweeten it, perhaps, with some fleeting sensual pleasures? Why not have something to show for all our trouble at the end of our time here on earth? Why not make it, as we may, into a crown to take with us into that life which has no end?

This is what those do who remain in the grace of God, who commit no mortal sin, or who, if they ever fall into it, repent and free themselves from it without delay. All their pains and all their labors are recorded in heaven, and treasured up to be woven into a crown of merit for such as persevere to the end. God is with them, as with St. Peter on the lake of Genesareth; they work for him, and in the light of his presence, and their slightest actions obtain a rich reward.

But those who foolishly think that to remain thus is a task beyond their strength, who pass their lives in mortal sin, and only seldom and for a short time rise from it, have the same trouble; and at the end, if indeed they come to God then and enter heaven, being

saved as by fire, they find no treasure of good works gone before them. "Master," they have to say, "we have worked all night and have taken nothing. We have worked in the night of sin all our life."

Let us not, then, follow their example. Let us not run their fearful risk of not obtaining salvation at all; and let us also determine that when we are saved we will have a life well filled with the fruits of grace to lay at our Saviour's feet, for which we may merit to hear him say: "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

SERMON XCIII.

FISHING FOR MEN.

Master, we have labored all the night, and have taken nothing.

St. Peter was without doubt a good fisherman, and a patient one, as all good fishermen are. He was content to fish all night with such poor luck as to catch nothing at all.

But after he had taken our Lord on board his ship it seemed as if all the fish in the lake were anxious to be caught. Such a wonderful haul was made that St. Peter and all the other fishermen were dumfounded with astonishment. How mightily they were all pleased may well be imagined.

Now, I think there is in our day something going on very like St. Peter's fishing all night and catching no fish. The Catholic Church is the ship of Peter, and he who exercises the authority of master in that

ship, together with his mates and other officers, are holding the place which St. Peter was exalted to when our Lord made him the master fisherman of men. That is, the Holy Father, the pope, the bishops and priests are fishing for men, and our Lord promised that they should catch them, too.

In a certain degree, also, every one on board Peter's ship—all Catholics—have to do with this great work—the spreading out the nets and drawing souls into the true church.

For some time there have been some efforts made to catch a certain kind of fish known as *Protestants*, and there is another sort, also becoming common in these waters of ours, called *Infidels*. And it seems to me that there has been a good deal of fishing all night long, and not half the haul made that was hoped for. We feel like repeating St. Peter's complaint—"Lord, we have labored all the night and taken nothing."

The fishermen know their business, and they have worked hard. No trouble on that score. When may we hope that the promise of our Lord will be fulfilled and labor shall be crowned with success? I'll tell you. It will be after Christ has taught his divine doctrine from the ship, and when he can say to us, "Now let down your nets."

If there is anything both true and astonishing it is the prevailing ignorance of their own or of any other religion among Protestants and infidels. You would think that, among so many learned and well-to-do people who have every advantage of education and general information at hand, they would not only know what they believed, but also the reasons why. They make a great boast of knowing, some of them,

all the *good* that there is in the Bible, and others all of what they call absurdities and contradictions in the holy volume. You need not be afraid of all this supposed knowledge. In fact, some read the Bible very little, and great numbers of them don't hear half of what the majority of us Catholics hear in church. Catechize them, and it will soon appear that they are densely ignorant of all religion. How can we hope that such people will admire all the beauties of our faith, and appreciate all the powerful and logical arguments in favor of this or that truth, who are so lacking in information about the very rudiments of religion?

I meet such people frequently, who are, nevertheless, regular hearers and worshippers of the best preachers of our day, or who pick up here and there some sayings of the pretentious philosopher of the hour.

Christ must teach this multitude from the ship of Peter, and he will do so when he can say of us, "Whoso heareth you, heareth me"—that is, when you and I so live up to our faith that when they hear us they hear a Christ speak, and when what we speak is for their instruction and suited to their great ignorance of divine things. We must be simple and plain in our instructions when directed to them.

Moreover, we must thrust this instruction of the first things every Christian (be he child or man) ought to know upon them in all charity; and be quick about it, for without it they will be in imminent peril of losing their souls. They are good enough according to what they know. They, like the best of us, love truth, and are really hungering

for what is unquestionably for their greater happiness. Oh! if we Catholics would only live like Christ and speak like Christ, then it would be high time to let down the net. Protestants and infidels would rush in crowds to be taken. Priests would not know where to find room for the converts.

Enter into the work of spreading Christian doctrine, then. Buy Catholic books of instruction. Buy a good many and give away a good many. It may set them thinking. And the reading of good, plain instructions, like the simple words of our Lord, will set them to praying as well. When a Protestant or an infidel once begins to pray to know the truth, it will be sure to lead him into the net that is let down from St. Peter's ship, only too happy to be numbered among those taken by the divinely-appointed fishers of men.

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. 1 *St. Peter iii.* 8–15. Dearly beloved: Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, loving brotherhood, merciful, modest, humble: not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but on the contrary, blessing: for unto this are you called, that by inheritance you may possess a blessing. "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him decline from evil, and do good: let him seek peace, and pursue it: because the eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and his ears unto their prayers: but the countenance of the Lord against them that do evil things." And who is he that can hurt you, if you be zealous of good? But if also you suffer anything for justice' sake, blessed are ye. And be not afraid of their terror and be not troubled; but sanctify the Lord Christ in your heart.

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. v.* 20–24. At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: I say to you, that unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill shall be guilty of the judgment. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be guilty of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be guilty of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be guilty of hell fire. Therefore if thou offerest thy gift at the altar, and there shalt remember that thy brother

hath anything against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and first go to be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

SERMON XCIV.

FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES.

If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother; and then coming, thou shalt offer thy gift.—GOSPEL OF THE DAY.

THERE are few things in common life, my dear brethren, more surprising than the fact that some people seem to consider themselves good Christians, and well worthy to receive the sacraments, who have a grudge against some of their neighbors and never speak to them; perhaps never answer, even if spoken to by them. These people seem to think, I say, that they are worthy to receive the sacraments; and this not only at Easter, but, it may be, quite frequently. Some of them, I fear, consider themselves to be pious and devout; they say, it may be, long prayers every night and perhaps also in the morning—though, if they really thought of the words on their lips, I do not know how they could get through one Our Father. "As we forgive those who trespass against us" ought to stick in their throats. They will not speak to those persons who, as they think, have trespassed against them; they wish, then, that God should have nothing to say to themselves. "Forgive us," they say to him, "*as we forgive;* we will

not speak to others, so do not thou speak to us; turn thy back on us, pass us by; that is what we do to our neighbors. Cut us off from thy friendship, send us to hell"; that is what every Our Father means in the mouth of these detestable hypocrites when they say, "Forgive as we forgive."

How these people get through their confession and receive absolution is as surprising as that they should make the attempt to do so. They are caught, no doubt, once in a while, but it is to be feared that a large proportion of them slip through the priest's fingers, either by saying nothing about the sinful disposition in which they are or by telling a lie to the Holy Ghost and to their own hearts, if they would but examine them, by putting all the fault on the other party. When the other party appears, then we come nearer to the truth. "I spoke to So-and-so," they say, "but got no answer."

Now, let it be distinctly understood that to refuse to answer any one who speaks to us with a good intention; to take no notice of a word or a salute, given with a view to renewing friendship, or even out of ordinary politeness, is, in almost every case, a mortal sin. Of course I do not mean that is so when the omission comes from inattention or carelessness; no, I mean when it is intended as a cut to the other party. About the only instance in which it can be allowed is that of a superior, who has a right to take the matter in his own hands, and can put off reconciliation for a time without danger. A father, for instance, may keep his child at a distance for a while in this way as a punishment for an evident offence; but I am speaking of equals, one of whom can have no right to punish the other.

But you may say: "This person has injured me grievously. He or she ought to beg my pardon." Perhaps this is so; though often, if you could see your own heart and that of the other as God sees them, you ought to beg pardon as much as he or she. It is rare that an unprovoked injury is done by any one consciously and without what seems a pretty good excuse to himself. But even granting that the injury is really grievous and unprovoked, do you expect your neighbor to go down on his knees to you, or to humble himself by a formal apology, not knowing how it will be taken? Would you find it easy to do such a thing yourself, however guilty?

No, by turning him off in this way you put the balance of injury against yourself, however great may have been the other's offence. No one should dare to go to Communion after such a slight unatoned for. And yet even brothers and sisters have done such things, and, I fear, received Christ's Body and Blood with this sin on their souls.

Let us have, then, no more of this. If one is not willing to be in charity with his or her neighbor, let him or her not come to confession, or at least, if coming, take care to state the matter as it really is. "Go first and be reconciled with thy brother; and then, coming, thou shalt offer thy gift."

SERMON XCV.

FEAST OF SS. PETER AND PAUL.

To-day, my brethren, holy church celebrates the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul, one the prince of the

Apostles, the other the great teacher of the Gentiles. Their glorious martyrdom took place the same day in the imperial city of Rome. A glorious victory indeed was their death, one being crucified, head downwards, the other beheaded, sealing thus with their blood that invincible faith in our Lord and in his religion which has made them fit to be corner-stones of his spiritual temple. Besides their faith, they were most distinguished for confidence in God. The two virtues, faith and hope, of course, blended together in their souls, borrowed from each other, and in the fire of heavenly love were melted into one. Yet confidence in God, or the virtue of hope, was the very impulse that set them forth to preach, gave them their gift of miracles, and led them out at last with the deepest joy to offer up the sacrifice of their lives.

And it was by such heroic trust in God that our holy church was founded. The beginnings of the true religion may be summed up by saying that God sent out men who were willing to stake their lives upon his fidelity to his promises. The soil on which our Saviour planted the true vine was watered by the blood of martyrs. The Breviary speaks of the blood of our two great Apostles as the purple robe of immortal Rome. And their virtue of implicit, instinctive confidence in God's love for us and for his church is the spiritual garment every Christian puts on when he is made a member of Christ.

Looking across all those centuries, my brethren, and contemplating the martyrdom of SS. Peter and Paul, our hearts should be strengthened. What are the trials of the church now compared to those at the very beginning? We lament, indeed, that St.

Peter's successor is a captive in his own house, and also that in many regions of the world the true faith of the Apostles has to struggle for its very life. Yet the struggles of the church are now those of a giant, are against a world in great part doubtful of its own cause; struggles which make us only the more evidently pleasing to God, as they are gradually forcing us to strip ourselves of every human help and practise the Apostolic virtue of trust in God alone. "Some upon horses and some upon chariots, but we call upon the name of the Lord." Oh! when we come to realize that the welfare of the church is not in numbers, or in fine buildings, or in the wealth and power of Catholics, but only and entirely in the practice of the virtues of our religion, we shall not have long to wait for the triumph of the truth. When the vast world-power that we call the Catholic religion was (seemingly) but the frantic experiment of a handful of men, just then it won its noblest victories. Heathenism could not be voted down nor fought down; nor did God send earthquakes and floods to cleanse the earth of its foulness. The men who founded our faith won the victory because they were penetrated with the conviction that the Maker and Governor of mankind was their Lord, and that Jesus Christ, his Son, would never swerve from his plighted word.

Such, then, brethren, is the virtue I bid you learn from the example of SS. Peter and Paul: confidence in God. Learn that and it will teach you all. How the value of prayer is shown forth by this virtue; how the practice of patience is commended; how the purely spiritual side of religion is brought forward by trust in God! And to you of this church it is espe-

cially proposed to cultivate this Apostolic virtue. For is not your church named for St. Paul? And is he not associated every way, historically and in the devotions of our religion, with the prince of the Apostles, St. Peter? They are our first fruits; they are most closely joined to Christ, the root of the spiritual tree of life. St. Paul says: "For if the first fruit be holy, so is the mass also; and if the root be holy, so are the branches."

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. *Rom. vi.* 3–11. Brethren: We all, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in his death. For we are buried together with him by baptism unto death: that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, in like manner we shall be of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, and that we may serve sin no longer. For he that is dead is justified from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ: knowing that Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over him. For in that he died to sin, he died once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. So do you also reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

GOSPEL. *St. Mark viii.* 1–9 At that time: When there was a great multitude with Jesus, and had no thing to eat, calling his disciples together, he saith to them: I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint in the way, for some of them came from afar off. And his disciples answered him: From whence can any one satisfy them here with bread in the wilderness? And he asked them: How many loaves have ye? And they said: Seven. And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground, and taking the seven loaves,

giving thanks, he broke, and gave to his disciples to set before them, and they set them before the people. And they had a few little fishes, and he blessed them and commanded them to be set before them. And they did eat and were filled, and they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

SERMON XCVI.

THE DIVINE BOUNTY.

And they did eat and were filled, and they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets.—St. Mark viii. 8.

The Gospel to-day tells us of the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, whereby our Lord fed the multitude in the wilderness. Not only did seven loaves and a few little fishes satisfy the hunger of four thousand, but seven baskets were filled with the fragments that were left. This is the way in which God always works in the dealings of his providence with mankind. He is not content with giving us enough: he gives us more than enough—"full measure, pressed down, and running over." He hath opened his hand and filled all things living with plenteousness. Look at the earth which he has prepared as a dwelling for the children of men, and see how bountifully he has provided for all their necessities. "Oh! that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men," and cry out with David: "How great are thy works O Lord! Thou hast

made all things in wisdom ; the earth is filled with thy riches."

But if God has thus lavishly provided for the bodily wants of man, he has been even more bountiful in providing for the needs of his soul. "He hath satisfied the empty soul and filled the hungry soul with good things." Just as air, water, and food, the things necessary for the sustenance of our bodies, are found in the world in great abundance, so also does God's grace abound, which is necessary for the life of our souls. Just as we must breathe the air in order to live, so we have but to open our mouths in prayer, the breath of the soul, and God's grace, which is as plentiful as the air of heaven, is poured into our hearts, filling us with new life. And as we must breathe the breath of prayer, so also we must drink the water of salvation which, mingled with blood, flowed from the wounded side of Jesus. That living water which He promised to give is his Precious Blood, shed for all upon the cross, yet continually flowing in copious streams through the sacraments to cleanse and refresh the souls of men. We have but to approach and drink and our thirsty souls shall be satisfied. "He that shall drink of the water that I shall give him," said Jesus, "shall not thirst for ever. But the water that I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." Draw near, then, with joy and draw this water from the Saviour's fountains, the sacraments which he has ordained in his church. Wash therein, and you shall be clean ; drink thereof, and your soul shall be refreshed.

And for food he gives us the Bread of life, the living Bread which came down from heaven,

even his own most Precious Body and Blood in the blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. "He that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever"; but "unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, you shall not have life in you." His grace would have been enough to sustain us; but he is not content with giving us his grace alone, he must give us also Himself. This is the greatest instance of the wonderful prodigality of God towards us. After creating the world, and providing it with all that is needful for our bodily life, after giving us his grace in an almost overwhelming abundance, we might think that his generosity would have spent itself. But no, he goes still further, and his last and greatest gift is himself to be the food of our souls. Surely there is nothing beyond this. God could not do more for us than he has done. In giving us himself he has done the utmost that is possible.

When, therefore, we behold the wonderful works of God in our behalf our hearts should swell with thankfulness to him who gives so abundantly unto us, above all that we could ask or think. Since God has been so generous towards us, let us not be guilty of the base ingratitude of despising his gifts, and rejecting the mercies he holds out to us! Rather be generous towards him, and as he gives us himself, so let us give ourselves wholly to him, striving in all things to please him, offering ourselves daily unto him, soul and body, as "a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, our reasonable service."

SERMON XCVII.

FEAST OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

To-day we celebrate the Feast of the Birthday of St. John the Baptist, of whom our Lord said that a greater man than he was never born; and we well know what kind of greatness Jesus Christ would make much of—the greatness of holiness. Looking at his life altogether, we see in him a striking example of one wielding great power and acquiring an eternal fame, who set out to do neither, but rather avoided both. No doubt as he grew up he must have heard something about his miraculous conception, of the angelic prophecy concerning him, and of that wonderful visit the Mother of God made to his own mother before either he or Jesus Christ was born. No doubt he felt himself to be consecrated to God, and set apart in a special manner to aspire after a holy life. And now it is just his fidelity to all those interior inspirations, which, costing him, as it did, so much self-abnegation, and taking him apparently out of the way of obtaining a great name, really made him great.

He was a notable example of those who gain all by giving up all. Only those who have this character in a marked degree are truly great in their souls, for virtue is both the source and the glory of nobility. No birth however high, no station or office however exalted, no good luck however extraordinary, high honors, great wealth, nor heaps of badges and medals can make up for the lack of it. A mean, covetous, selfish, proud, gluttonous, sensual, envious-minded, overbearing, spiteful, unforgiving, greedy king or

emperor neither is nor can be great, no matter how vast his dominions or countless his subjects. On the other hand, we Catholics know of, and recognize often, the most extraordinary nobleness and refinement of soul in many who are among the poorest, most suffering, and often, in book-learning, the most ignorant of our brethren. What is it that gives to many such that singular taste for and perception of what is pure, beautiful, and true, which they unmistakably possess? And, in times of great trial and sacrifice, what is it that often brings them out above and ahead many others of whom we might be led to expect so much more? I'll tell you: it is the greatness of their holiness, the nobility of their virtue. It is that manifestation of what is really great in the sight of God and his angels—their love of truth, their ready self-denial, their big-hearted charity, their loyalty to God and religion, the independence of the world, their free obedience to superiors, their sweet endurance of pain and sorrow, their meek, forgiving spirit. Such as these are the souls of the great, whom the world, the flesh, and the devil attack and may wound, but cannot conquer. If sometimes we are tempted, dear brethren, to envy the apparent good fortune, as it is esteemed, of those whose greatness is not thus founded in virtue, we may be sure that we are weighing something with a very light and empty weight in the other balance, which may be very bulky, sparkling, and showy, like a big, bright, sunshiny soap-bubble, but with nothing inside, and of very short continuance.

So you see how true greatness is within the reach of every one, and within quite easy reach, too. One is not obliged to do a great many things, nor labor

many years, nor accomplish what makes a long report with large headings in the newspapers. One has only to take care *how* the work is done one is called to do—with what spirit one does it. Says the "Imitation of Christ": "We are apt to inquire *how much* a man has done, but with *how much virtue* he has done it is not so diligently considered. We ask whether he be strong, rich, beautiful, ingenious, a good writer, good singer, or a good workman; but how poor he is in spirit, how patient and meek, how devout and internal, is what few speak of." Yes, it is not so much the long and splendid record of the work, but the spirit of the working, the pure, unambitious, God-loving intention ruling our labors, that makes them worthy of everlasting memory and meritorious of the renown of a great name, which leaves behind one a memory held in benediction and the history of a life delicious to recall.

SERMON XCVIII.

IDLENESS.

And they had nothing to eat.—Gospel of the Sunday.

The people who crowded about our Lord had nothing to eat, because out of love of the word of God they had for a time quit their work and their homes. This docility, this constancy argues well for their earnestness in the fulfilment of all their other duties. They were out of food, not through laziness, but because of set purpose they preferred spiritual to temporal nourishment. Hence they merited

this extraordinary and unlooked-for manifestation of our Lord's goodness and providence in supplying them with food.

We may confidently expect, my brethren, the assistance of God even in temporal want and necessity if our honest endeavors fail. We are not to be over-solicitous; we are not to desire nor strive after an over-abundance of such things. This promise, however, we have: that our Heavenly Father knows our needs, and he will come to our aid. But we have a duty, an obligation to discharge, and that is to work, to earn our bread. Now, this is the point of my sermon: that there are many people—the number seems to be increasing—who have nothing to eat, or who say they have not, and it is their own fault.

They do not merit any special interposition of Heaven to save them from the consequences of their own laziness; they do not seem to deserve, they do not deserve, the assistance of the charitable, who are the stewards and the representatives of the Lord. Now, brethren, do not imagine that this is a harsh and an unchristian way of regarding the necessities of the very poor; do not suppose that I make no allowance for the sickness, the lack of work, the hard times, the calamities which from time to time afflict the deserving and the laborious. If you are in a position to know, you cannot but be persuaded that the tendency to ask for help, the inclination to throw burdens on institutions public and private, the frequency, the boldness, the unreasonableness of such demands is on the increase; the number of those who are unwilling to exert themselves, to undergo the routine, the strain of work, grows day by day. Yet the Apostle says, "If any man will not work,

neither let him eat." He bids every one labor faithfully in the calling wherein he has been placed. There is no such thing as true religion save in the faithful discharge, first of all, of our natural duties, and in compliance with the first great law of labor.

Now, I have frequently noticed one peculiarity about many of those who say they have nothing to eat, and that is, they cannot be said to have nothing to drink; and the presence of this kind of nourishment explains very often the lack of all other. No, my brethren, let us be industrious, saving, and sober, mindful that the law of God has imposed labor on us; let us try to help ourselves; then, if we fail, Heaven will surely help us, even in ways as truly miraculous as our Saviour's for the multitude in the desert.

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. *Rom. vi.* 19–23. Brethren: I speak a human thing, because of the infirmity of your flesh. For as you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity, unto iniquity; so now yield your members to serve justice, unto sanctification. For when you were the servants of sin, you were free from justice. What fruit therefore had you then in those things, of which you are now ashamed? For the end of them is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death: but the grace of God, everlasting life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. vii.* 15–21. At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree yieldeth good fruit, and the bad tree bad fruit. A good tree cannot yield bad fruit, neither can a bad tree yield good fruit. Every tree that yieldeth not good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them. Not every man that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

SERMON XCIX.

MORTAL SIN THE DEATH OF THE SOUL.

The wages of sin is death.

When the Apostle, my dear brethren, wrote these words, he did not mean only to express the truth (for truth it is) that the inevitable result of sin, even in this world, is the misery, and finally the death, of the sinner; nor even (though this also is true) that by sin death was introduced into the world. But he wished especially to teach us that the direct and immediate effect of mortal sin is a death much more fearful in itself, and much more awful in its consequences, than any mere cessation of the life of the body—namely, the death of the soul.

Mortal sin cuts a man off from his last end; it, as it were, disconnects the soul of any one who is unhappy enough to be in that state with all the springs of the supernatural state. A soul which is in mortal sin is cut off from the mystical body of Christ, and, like a limb cut away from the body of a man, it ceases to have any part in the nourishment with which that body is supported and enabled to pass through the wear and tear of the every-day life of the world.

The soul from the time of baptism to the time of death is kept alive by the gift of sanctifying grace. Remove this and the soul inevitably dies. Restore this and it is alive again. Now, it is just the removal of this sanctifying grace which is the immediate effect of mortal sin. As long as any baptized person remains free from the fearful stain of delibe-

rate mortal sin sanctifying grace remains, and every sacrament received, nay, every good act performed, every good word spoken, and every aspiration to higher and better things which passes through the mind, increases the grace which is conferred upon that soul; but the moment the will is deliberately turned away from its Creator, at that moment sanctifying grace ceases and the soul dies. This death is a real death of the soul; it prevents the soul from meriting anything towards the attainment of its last end, and should any one be unhappy enough to die with mortal sin upon his conscience his soul must, by the law of its very being, be buried for all eternity in hell.

See, then, my dear brethren, how fearful a thing this sin is which can have such fearful effects. God has made us to enjoy him for all eternity in heaven, and yet by sin we turn against ourselves, and, if I may so speak, compel the good God to issue against us an eternal sentence of banishment from his divine presence. We prevent our own souls from reaching that end for which alone they were created. We reap for ourselves an eternity of untold misery, instead of one of surpassing bliss.

Let us, then, to-day make a firm and constant resolution that, cost what it may, nothing in this world shall induce us to kill our souls by staining them with sin; and if any one is so unhappy as to be in that state now, let him now resolve that he will by a good confession cleanse his soul, and from henceforward, casting behind the things that are past, he will press forward to the things that are before.

SERMON C.

FALSE PROPHETS.

Beware of false prophets.—GOSPEL OF THE DAY.

I THINK, my dear brethren, that you all know pretty well what our Lord means when he says in to-day's Gospel, "Beware of false prophets." You would tell me, at least if you stopped to think for a moment, that he means to warn us against those who were to come after him, pretending to teach his doctrine, claiming that theirs was the true and pure Christian religion, or putting on, as he says, the sheep's clothing, but really striving to draw the faithful away from the unity of the church which he had established; being, in fact, to use his own words, ravenous wolves.

Yes, you would tell me this, and you would be right in your explanation of his words. It is, indeed, of these false Christian teachers that he would warn us. It is against the innumerable errors which are taught as Christianity, and against the countless self-appointed guides to his one religion who were to multiply as time went on, that he wished to forewarn us; to keep us from listening to them, or allowing ourselves to be turned by them from the one source of truth which he has provided for us in his holy Catholic Church.

And no doubt, in a way, we listen to his warning, and are not much deceived by their pretensions, at least in these days. If a Catholic loses his faith nowadays, it is usually easy enough to see that he does so, not because he is really deceived by the

false prophet and takes him for a true one, but because he wishes to lead an easier life without being blamed for it; because he objects to confession and the other laws of the church as imposing too much restraint on him, or because his temporal interests will be advanced by the change.

But still, in spite of this general security which we now have against being deceived by the persuasions of those who would lead us into error, nay, even on account of this very security which we feel, we do not obey quite carefully enough our Lord's warning. We think we are in no danger from these false prophets, and so we are willing enough to hear what they say. We would not join with them; far from it; but we think there is no harm in hearing or reading their discourses, or acquainting ourselves with their books. We do not, in short, beware of them; we think that there is no need to do so.

Really, however, there is. When our Lord said, "Beware of these false prophets," he meant just what he said. He knew that they would do us harm if we did not beware; that, if they did not destroy our faith, they would at least mar its purity or diminish its intensity if we did not take care to avoid them and their teachings in every way. And the church has always acted on the principle which her Divine Founder here laid down, in her instructions to her children. She does not wish even her priests to concern themselves with heretical or infidel doctrines, except with the intention of confuting them as their office requires, fortified though they be with the most thorough instruction in and knowledge of the truth.

We are none of us perfectly wise and above the

reach of even the most absurd errors, especially when our nature, corrupted by sin, is enlisted on the side of those errors; and, if not in danger of actually falling into any of them in particular, we may at least, by acquainting ourselves with those into which great men have been led, be likely to fall into the most dangerous of all errors, that of believing that truth is so hard to find that it cannot be expected that all should find it, and that it makes no difference what a man believes, as long as he does what seems to the world in general to be right.

The true course for us is, then, to beware of false guides in religion by keeping out of their way altogether; and, on the other hand, to study as far as we can the truth, which, if we learn it and grasp it as we should, conveys in itself the answer to them all. Listen to the true prophets, and leave the false ones alone; that is the highest wisdom from the mouth of our Divine Lord himself.

SERMON CI.

THE LAST SIN.

For the wages of sin is death; but the grace of God, life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord.—FROM THIS SUNDAY'S EPISTLE.

THIS is not the only place in Holy Writ, my brethren, where eternal life and death are set before us as the wages we shall some day be paid. The word of God frequently admonishes us of the choice we are compelled to make between eternal sorrow and

eternal joy, and for this most evident reason : we are always actually engaged in making the choice. The very essence of our merit hereafter will be that we shall have freely and deliberately chosen Almighty God and his friendship, in preference to any and everything besides. And the reason, and the only reason, why a man will lose his soul will be because he committed mortal sin and died unrepentant—that is to say, choosing to love what God bids him hate. What we call the choice between virtue and vice St. Paul calls the choice between life and death. And with that choice we are constantly confronted. Not that we always realize it, nor do I mean to say that the first time one grievously offends God he settles his fate eternally ; but that each mortal sin really earns the wages of eternal death, and only the blessed mercy of God saves us from our deserved punishment. And furthermore, it is *some* mortal sin or other that at last breaks down God's patience. If at any particular occasion he does not see fit to take us at our word, so to speak, and leave us for ever in that state of enmity that we have chosen, it is not because we do not deserve it ; it is because he is a loving Father to us, and is often willing to stand a great deal of wickedness on our part ; or because we have some dear friends who are servants of God and who pray for us ; or because the Blessed Virgin has acquired some special attachment to us and intervenes for us ; or because God reserves us for a later day, when he will make such an example of us as will save other sinners ; or because, again, he saves us for a later day to make us models of true penance.

But just look around you, brethren ; just call to mind what you have heard or perhaps seen of God's

judgments, and the Apostle's lesson becomes object-teaching. Have you not heard of a sudden and unprovided death and then remembered how years ago that man started a disreputable business? It was thus that he made his decision for all eternity. On the other hand, a man now temperate, once a drunkard, will tell you that long ago he took the pledge and broke it, and broke it again, but still persevered, and finally, by the grace of God, has managed to keep it. He was fighting the battle of fate and he won the victory. That dreadful appetite overcome, the practice of religion became easy to him.

In another case a man is led away little by little from the rules of honest dealing; at last he refuses to pay a certain just debt, one that he can easily pay if he wishes. After that avarice eats into the core of his heart and he is lost for ever.

And, brethren, what a relief to hear after a sudden death that the poor soul was a monthly communicant!

Many are tested by Almighty God demanding that they shall withdraw from the proximate occasions of mortal sin. The voice of conscience, a sermon heard in the church, the private advice of some good friend—for all these are the voice of God—admonish them against what leads them to mortal sin; against very bad company, or the saloon, or the Sunday excursion, or dangerous reading, or lonely company-keeping. Perhaps one's conduct about such dangers has more to do with his choice in eternity than anything else.

I do not mean to say that this fateful decision is a mere lottery, but it is a moment at the end of years of rebellion against God when an effort is made by

the grace of God to save the sinner; and for weal or for woe it is the last chance. Some time or other the last sin will be committed, the last grace will be granted.

O my brethren! how very reasonable is the holy fear of God. Oh! how wise are they who have joined fear and love of God together so that the fire of love has burned the dross of slavishness out of fear, and fear has mingled reverence and humility with love. Alas! that so many should live as if eternal life and death had no meaning for the present hour.

Some are like that millionaire I heard of. Walking home one day, a heavy shower of rain began. He stopped a hack and asked what the driver would take him home for. Fifty cents, was the answer. He began to beat him down, and finally, refusing more than twenty five cents, he walked home in the rain. But he caught cold, went to bed, and died. He had played the miser many a time before, but the last time had come. So many a one thinks his one sin more, his one other rejection of grace, is but like the multitude of other such offences gone before; and all the time he is deciding an eternal fate.

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. *Rom. viii.* 12-17. Brethren: We are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die. But if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live. For whosoever are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear: but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba (Father). For the Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God. And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

GOSPEL. *St. Luke xvi.* 1-9. At that time: Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable: There was a certain rich man who had a steward: and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said to him: What is this I hear of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship: for now thou canst not be steward. And the steward said within himself: What shall I do, because my lord taketh away from me the stewardship? To dig I am not able, to beg I am ashamed. I know what I will do, that when I shall be put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. Therefore calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first: How much dost thou owe my lord? But he said: A hundred barrels of oil. And he said to him: Take thy bill and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then he said to another: And how much dost thou owe? Who said: A hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him: Take thy bill and write

eighty. And the lord commended the unjust steward, forasmuch as he had done wisely: for the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. And I say to you: Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.

SERMON CII.

SPIRIT AND FLESH.

For if you live according to the flesh you shall die. But if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh you shall live.—Rom. viii. 13.

What does the Apostle mean by this? This only, that the flesh with its concupiscence and lusts must never get such power over our will that it will carry us along with it and make us obey its longings and desires when we know these are forbidden by Almighty God. I say "this only" because to have the flesh is no sin; neither is it a sin to feel the disorderly movements of the flesh that lead to sin; but it is a sin to consent to these and to follow them. For this reason we are told that if we mortify the deeds of the flesh, to which these movements of the flesh lead us, we shall live. But what does the word "mortify" mean? It means to destroy that which makes the life of a thing. Notice here the Apostle does not tell us to mortify the flesh itself but the deeds of the flesh. To do this we need not then attempt to kill the flesh, but we must destroy all that gives life to its deeds.

What are the deeds of the flesh? They are the

seven capital sins—pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, sloth. Can we kill them? In the most important sense we can. We can get them so under our control that, after awhile, they will move us but slightly and cannot influence us to any great degree. We shall feel from time to time that they are still present in us, but that cannot disturb us much. We shall have taken their strength away. We shall have made them so weak that we can check them easily.

Ought not each one of us strive to get ourselves into that blessed state? But how can we do it? Make up your mind to do it. Form a good resolution, one that will not change but that will be firm for life. Then live according to that resolution. When pride is aroused, refuse to follow its promptings; when covetousness moves the heart, stop the eager desire for gain; when lust would lead you away, contend against the thought until it is driven out; when anger disturbs, seal the lips with the sign of the holy cross; when gluttony makes you long for feasting and drinking, refuse to go where these things are going on; when envy racks the soul, pray for the one who is the object of envy; when sloth tempts you to self-indulgence and inactivity, stir up the fear of God and holy shame within the soul, for sloth is a destroyer indeed of all that is truly manly and heroic in us.

But all this is about as hard to do as anything a man can do, some may say. Yes, it is hard to do, but the success is *sure*. Shall a man do less for God than for himself? See the time and labor spent to secure that which is necessary for the body and success in the life of only a few years in this world.

Shall a man not do as much for the good of his soul and for eternal life in the next world?

Is it really so hard as it seems? By no means. We make it harder than it really is by putting it all together and by thinking we are to do it all at once. This is not true. It must be done by degrees, slowly, patiently, perseveringly, but surely.

The devil makes us think it harder by telling us, when we feel the sharpness of the first struggle, "You can't bear it this way, for life." You *can* if God wills it and gives you the grace. And most people, almost all Christian souls, do not have it "this way, for life." Those who keep up the struggle get stronger day by day. In them the flesh and the movements of sin grow less day by day. The devil, however, wishes us to believe the lie he tells, to make us give up the struggle. Do not listen to the lie and it cannot hurt you. Remember always, it is a lie, and the mind will not take hold of it.

We can make it all the easier by trusting God, who will always help us in the struggle. *Pray* more. Go to confession often. The confessor will then help us and remove much of the burden by good advice. Go to Communion often, and God himself will make it easier for us than we imagine by giving his own strength to the soul at that time. Only begin earnestly to control the flesh, continue perseveringly to use confession and Communion. This, with daily morning and evening prayer, will take away very many difficulties. Soon we shall find we have truly mortified the deeds of the flesh, and then indeed we shall live, for the flesh will then be dead or dying fast and too weak to hurt the soul. Keep, then, in the mind the text from the Epistle of to-day: "For if

you live according to the flesh you shall die. But if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh you shall live."

SERMON CIII.

THE BUSINESS OF THE SOUL.

The Lord commended the unjust steward, forasmuch as he had done wisely.—WORDS TAKEN FROM TO-DAY'S GOSPEL.

ONE of the things which strikes us most forcibly in reading the instructions of our Blessed Lord as we have them in the holy Gospels is the matter-of-fact, common-sense, business-like manner in which he sets before us the way we must act in order to save our souls. We find no sentimentalism, no rhetoric, no fine-sounding flights of eloquence which delight the imagination and please the fancy indeed, but which are too fleeting and flimsy to serve as a basis of every-day action. No; with our Lord this matter of the salvation of our souls is a matter of infinite business, a question of eternal profit and loss. Let me recall a few examples: "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking good pearls, who, when he had found one of great price, went his way and sold all he had and bought it." Here the way in which we are to act in order to get the kingdom of heaven is compared to the way in which the man of business acts who finds a good article—something worth his money. What does he do? Why, if it is really worth it—and the kingdom of heaven, the salvation of our souls is worth it—he sells all that he has and buys it. And yet again our

Lord places before us the salvation of our souls as based upon a calculation of what is the more profitable course to take in those words the realization of which has called forth the highest heroism of the greatest of the saints: "If thy eye offend thee pluck it out and cast it from thee." Why? Because "it is better for thee with one eye to enter the kingdom of God than, having two eyes, to be cast into the hell of fire." Here again it is a calculation of loss and gain—the loss of an eye in this world as against that of the whole body in the next. Shall I, on the principle that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, keep my two eyes; or shall I, for the sake of saving the whole body, pluck out the eye, cut off the foot or hand? But of all the places where this way of looking at things and of acting is inculcated and enforced, the most striking is in the parable read in to-day's Gospel. Here our Lord, in order to lead us to take a practical, hard-headed way of acting with reference to the salvation of our souls, brings before us the conduct of the unjust steward, and, strange to say, actually praises it. And how did this unjust steward act? The unjust steward was a dishonest man. He had been placed in a position of trust, but had wasted his master's goods—perhaps speculated with his money, made false entries in his books, or something else of that kind. Well, the truth came out at last, as it generally does sooner or later, and he was at his wit's end what to do. No thought of repentance enters into his head; he has got on a wrong road, and he found it, as we all find it, very hard to get out of it. And so, knowing the men with whom he has to deal, he sends for some of his master's debtors, and, in order

to make them his friends and to establish a claim on them for help and assistance when he gets into trouble, he alters their bills and makes them less. "And the Lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely." Our Lord does not commend, of course, the dishonesty of his conduct; this we all understand. But he commends his clearness of sight as to what was for his worldly interest, and his promptitude in taking wise and suitable means to further that interest. What our Lord wants to teach us is that we must act for our highest interest in the same clear-sighted, determined, wise, and prudent way in which this specimen of a worldly man acted for the sordid and selfish and foolish ends of men of this world. Well, my brethren, take these thoughts home with you, and ask yourselves, each and every one of you, how you are acting. Have you an intelligent view of the end you have to attain, of its value and importance, and of the means by which it is to be attained, and are you acting earnestly in order to attain that end?

SERMON CIV.

THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD.

Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity: that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.—GOSPEL OF THE DAY.

MY dear brethren, there will come to each one of us a day when all those earthly goods we now enjoy shall fail us, when we shall have to turn our backs

on the world and all that it has to give us, and prepare ourselves to stand before him to whom all things that we had and enjoyed belong, and give an account to him of the uses which we have made of them. We have, like the steward in to-day's Gospel, a Lord and Master; and to him we must sooner or later give an account of our stewardship.

And it is only too likely, we may say it is indeed certain, that when that dread moment comes at which this world must be left behind, the charge will also be made against us, as against the steward in this parable, that we have wasted our Master's goods. Our consciences will rise up and condemn us, and anticipate the accusation which shall be brought against us when we shall actually come face to face with God. Then all the security we have had in the thought that we are not murderers, robbers, or adulterers shall vanish; we shall not be able to console ourselves with the idea that we have done no great harm to any one. We shall see how selfish and how sensual our lives have been; that we have wasted for the pleasure of a passing moment the greater part of those gifts which God gave us for his service. Wasted our time, our strength, our knowledge, and our abilities in getting for ourselves the means of gratification or amusement, or in raising ourselves for our own sake to a position of honor or of wealth. We shall see what we might have been, what God meant that we should be, and compare it with what we are.

Fain would we then be able to say with St. Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course." Our faith indeed we shall, it is to be hoped, have kept; but we shall feel that our fight has been

but a poor and cowardly one, and that we, instead of finishing the course which our Lord laid out for us, have gone over only a very small part of it, and that its goal is far, far away.

What, then, shall be our hope? For hope we must have if we would not offend God even more then than through life. He commands us to hope; but in what shall our hope be placed?

Where or in what but his mercy? He will take us, grievously deficient as we are, and make the little, miserable offerings which we have to present to him, the remnant of what he gave us, into some kind of a crown of eternal life, if only we will turn to him with our whole hearts; if we will at least, at that last moment, really believe in him, hope in him, and love him. He that perseveres to the end, he that will not die in mortal sin, shall be saved.

But what shall obtain for us at that last moment the faith, hope, and charity which we need? Who will help us to persevere when the enemies of our salvation are making the most of their last chance to snatch it from us? Will those with whom we have enjoyed life then stand by to help us? It is to be feared that they and all that they have done for us will not avail us much then. No, the friends who will then be most valuable to us will be those, if indeed we have such, whom we have not sought for our own sake, but whom we loved for God's sake. And it is not the riches which we amassed that will then be precious to us, but such as we have given away to those who needed it more than we.

These are the friends which our Lord, in to-day's Gospel, tells us to make, that they may help us at

the hour when our eternal destiny hangs trembling in the balance. These are the friends which may be made by that mammon of iniquity, those worldly riches which are too often the occasion of sin, and whose prayers and blessings may indeed be the means of our being received, in spite of our unprofitableness, into everlasting habitations. Happy is the man who, when he comes to die, knows that God's poor have prayed for him, and have blessed his name.

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. 1 *Cor. x.* 6–13. Brethren: We should not covet evil things, as they also coveted. Neither become ye idolaters, as some of them: as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed fornication, and there fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ: as some of them tempted, and perished by the serpents. Neither do you murmur: as some of them murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them in figure; and they are written for our correction, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh himself to stand, take heed lest he fall. Let no temptation take hold on you, but such as is human. And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.

GOSPEL. *St. Luke xix.* 41–47. At that time: When Jesus drew near Jerusalem, seeing the city, he wept over it, saying: If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee: and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee: and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone: because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation. And entering into the temple, he began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that

bought, saying to them : "It is written: "My house is the house of prayer"; but you have made it a den of thieves. And he was teaching daily in the temple.

SERMON CV.

JUSTICE AND MERCY.

And when he drew near, seeing the city, he wept over it.— FROM THE GOSPEL OF THE SUNDAY.

WHICH one of the children is best loved by the father and mother ? Is there any poor little cripple in the family ? That is the favorite child. It makes the parent's heart bleed to see the limping walk or the hunched back, to see the sallow, pain-marked face of the little one. That is the one who receives the warmest caress ; for that one the kindest tones and cheeriest words and nicest presents are reserved. Well, brethren, it is the same in the spiritual order. God has his best favors for his most unfortunate children : for men and women in the state of mortal sin. That is one reason why our Lord lavished such affection on the Jews ; they had most need of it. Their hearts were the hardest hearts in the world. Jerusalem was the most accursed city in the world. It and its people were on the point of committing the most awful crime possible to our race. Hence our Lord wept over it those bitter tears of rejected love, and breathed those deadly sighs of a heart wearied and disappointed in fruitless efforts for their salvation.

It is true, amidst those tears he told of the persistent obstinacy of the Jews, and of their final impenitence, and of their terrific chastisement. But he did it all with many tears and with a depth of re-

gret better told by tears than words. Brethren, there is a deep mystery taught us by this scene. It is the mystery of the union of two sentiments in God which to us seem essentially different—justice and mercy. How could our Saviour weep over a downfall so well deserved? How could he regret what none knew so well as he was to be a punishment all too light for the crimes of the Jews? Is there not a mystery here? How can it be explained? There is no adequate theoretical explanation of it. But there is a practical one, and a very excellent one, too. It is this: Put yourself in a Jew's place; fancy yourself one of that apostate race; stand up before our Lord and listen to his sentence given against you with infinite reluctance—every hard word a sigh of tender regret. Do you not see that this exhibition of mercy in the Judge only renders the justice of the sentence more evident to you and more dreadful? Mercy thus lends to Justice a weapon which, while it only crushes down its victim the deeper, at the same time elevates much higher in the culprit's eyes the rectitude of the sentence.

Of course, the justice of God and his mercy are perfectly equal. Yet in some true sense we may say that his mercy is more powerful than his justice. Does not the Psalmist say that God's mercy "is above all his works"? Do we not know by observation and experience that where the wrath of God sets apart a single victim his tender love wins over a thousand? Why, the very sentiments of our hearts, the very convictions of our minds by which we earn forgiveness in the Sacrament of Penance, are they not the free gift of God, earned by us only because "us" means persons penetrated with light and

strength streaming down from the throne of mercy? We offer our repentance to God in a kind of a way as children make Christmas presents to their father. Where do they get money to buy them? From their mother, and she saves it up from the household expenses or gets it as a gift from her husband. In the long run the presents were bought by the one to whom they are given. Yet they are very dear to the father; he values them; they are real presents to him; they express a real devotion; they lose nothing of their character of presents because he is at the expense of it all. So with our Heavenly Father. If he gives the gold we coin it; we stamp the beloved form of the Son of God on our poor prayers, so that when they have made the circuit and are back again in the divine bosom from which they sprang forth, somehow we have added something to them.

Brethren, let us hope that when our Lord's tears concerned us it was not in view of our reprobation, but of our salvation. Let us be inflamed, too, with a sense of our ingratitude that we are such unworthy children of so good a Father. A man may swagger and brag down his better self when merely threatened with punishment. But who among you can face, without flinching, the tears of so good a friend as our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

SERMON CVI.

NEGLECT OF DIVINE WARNINGS.

THE Gospel to-day tells us, my dear brethren, that Jesus wept as he approached Jerusalem; not for

himself, nor for all he was so soon to suffer there, but for the city itself, and for his chosen people, to whom he had given it for their glory and joy. Yes, this beautiful city was their joy and their pride; long before they had been taken from it into captivity by their enemies for a time, and as the Psalmist says, speaking in their name, "By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Sion." And he goes on: "If I forget thee, Jerusalem, may I forget my right hand; may my tongue cleave to my mouth if I do not remember thee, if I do not make Jerusalem the beginning of my joy."

And now this city of theirs was to be taken from them again by a more grievous and fatal disaster than it had ever yet suffered. They were to be scattered from it all over the world to do a long penance for their sins and their rejection of him who had come to redeem them. And our Divine Lord's Heart yearned for them, for these his creatures, and at the same time his brethren and his countrymen. Fain would he have saved them, if they would but have been willing, from the terrible sufferings they were to undergo. Gladly, as he says himself, would he have sheltered them, if they would even now have come to him, from the tempest which was about to break upon them from the justice of God. He wept because they would not come and avail themselves of his love.

We should pray for them that the day may be hastened when they shall return and acknowledge their true Messias, their own Lord and Master, the only true King of the Jews. But they are not the only ones to weep for; they are not the only ones whom he has loaded with favors, and who have been

ungrateful; there are others besides the Jews whom Almighty God has chosen for his people, but who have rejected him and distressed his loving heart. Who are they? They are in general all sinners, but especially such as are Catholics; they are those souls for whom Jesus has done so much from their earliest years, in the midst of whom he has lived and wrought so many works of power and goodness; those whom he has enlightened with his truth, those whom he has warned against sin, those whom he has borne with so long and forgiven so often, those whom he has fed with his own Body and Blood. And yet, through evil habits, by frequent mortal sin, they live on, deaf to his warnings, despising his love, not knowing the time of their visitation, until evil days and a sad ending come upon them. Can we wonder that their enemies, the evil one and their bad habits, compass them round about, and straiten them on all sides, and beat them down and leave them wasted and desolate? Can we wonder that, since they would not bear the sweet and ennobling yoke of Christ, they will be forced to groan in the fetters of Satan and be exiled for ever from the true Jerusalem, the home of peace, which is above? No, brethren; such is the fate of those who persistently abuse God's grace, who reject his mercy and his efforts to save them. God forbid that such a career, such an ending, be ours. Let us, then, take warning; let us be careful about temptations; let us not presume on our own strength nor on God's goodness in the past; let us not make light of anything which is dangerous or forbidden. Let us endeavor not to grieve our Lord by any infidelity, great or small, but try to be faithful to every grace in this the day of our visitation,

and to follow the things that are for our peace here and our happiness hereafter.

SERMON CVII.

LIVING FROM DAY TO DAY.

If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace.—St. Luke xix. 42.

The fault of the Jews, my brethren, was twofold: boasting of the past and waiting for the future. It is especially on account of the latter fault that our Lord in this day's Gospel lays such stress on the words "and that in this thy day." It is a warning against trying to live in the future.

We all know, to be sure, that one may go to the other extreme, and by a form of sloth be too careless of the future. Some things there are which are certain to come upon us, and their coming must be provided for. There is a judgment to come, and every minute of to-day is like a bailiff busy gathering evidence for that Divine Court. Temptation is sure to come, and its strain upon our virtue must be foreseen in every prayer of every day. The common wants of life for one's self and family are inevitable in the future, and must be prudently provided against. In all such things we know that the future is an actual fact, and is just as present to God as this very instant is to us.

What our Lord would rebuke is not a prudent foresight, but that weak and idle state of mind which postpones to the future what should be done

at once. This is the commonest of human delusions. In a temporal point of view it is condemned by the saying, "Procrastination is the thief of time," and it might be added of many other valuable commodities. In a spiritual point of view the dreadful result of delaying till to-morrow what should be done to-day is expressed by the saying, "Hell is paved with good intentions." Wise men resolve to do in the future only what they cannot do now. Many and many a poor soul has lost the kingdom of heaven for that one reason: resolving instead of doing.

Brethren, a practically-minded Christian lives his spiritual life from day to day. He knows that the future is something entirely in God's hands. As for himself, his actual ability to do good begins and ends with each passing hour. If he provides well for it as it comes and goes he has done his part; God will not fail to take care of the future. One's peace of mind is never secure till one has learned to be content with present duty well done. Oh! what a happiness when one's soul is unburdened of care for the future. Do you covet that happiness? It is yours if you leave nothing undone for the present. If you can honestly say, "That is all I can do for the present," you may add, "and the future also."

But, you say, what about a purpose of amendment? Does not that dwell specially on the future? Yes, it does; but it springs from a present sorrow. And if the sorrow be as heartfelt as it should be the purpose of amendment will take care of itself. A deep hatred of sin is the only true sorrow, and such a hatred must be enduring. The test of a contrite man is not what he promises but what he does. His sorrow unites the past and future in the present.

Warned by his past weakness, he begins right here and just now by prayer and work to guard against a future relapse.

Learn a lesson, brethren, from our Lord's warning and from the fate of the Jews. It is better to say one's morning prayers to-day than to resolve to become a saint next week. To-day is here, and next week is nowhere. This day is mine: I know not if I shall have so much as one other. God has the past and the future. I will thank him for the past, I will beg him for the future. As to the present, with God's help, I will set to work to do my utmost.

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. 1 *Cor. xii.* 2–11. Brethren: You know that when you were heathens you went to dumb idols, according as you were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, saith Anathema to Jesus. And no man can say, The Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit; and there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit. To one, indeed, by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom: to another, the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit: to another, faith in the same Spirit: to another, the grace of healing in one Spirit: to another, the working of miracles: to another, prophecy: to another, the discerning of spirits: to another, divers kinds of tongues: to another, interpretation of speeches: but all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one as he will.

GOSPEL. *St. Luke xviii.* 9-14. At that time: To some who trusted in themselves as just, and despised others, Jesus spoke this parable: Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee, standing, prayed thus with himself: O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, nor such as this publican. I fast twice in the week: I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift

up his eyes towards heaven; but struck his breast, saying: O God, be merciful to me a sinner! I say to you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

SERMON CVIII.

SYMPATHY FOR SINNERS.

O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, nor such as this publican.—St. Luke xviii. 11.

Did you never notice that pride and hardness of heart go together? That miserable Pharisee could not enjoy his self-glorification without condemning his neighbor, a person, as it happened, far more deserving than himself. Indeed, the worst vices seem to love each other's company as if they were all blood relatives. Coveting our neighbor's goods, for example, goes along with stinginess of our own; gluttony and lust are twins. Almost the same may be said of oppressing others and disobeying lawful authority; and in this hateful Pharisee we behold the union of pride in one's self and contempt for one's neighbor. The sinner seems to be bound with a chain every link of which is double.

Now, brethren, this is a fault often found in far better souls than this haughty Pharisee. Many of us have too little sympathy for persons whom we know to be in mortal sin. To be sure, it is no harm to rejoice that we are at friendship with heaven. But the worst of it is that some of us are never really

happy at the thought of our own virtues till we are quite miserable over our neighbor's wickedness; and when we say with our lips, How wicked So-and-So is! our heart whispers, And how good *I* am!

The spirit of correction possesses many good people—a spirit commonly the sign of hidden pride. No sooner do we take the first steps in amendment of life than we are divided between rejoicing in our own goodness and lamenting over other folk's vice. I know not what we good people should do for something to talk about were it not for our neighbor's shortcomings.

Brethren, this vanity is very foolish and very dangerous. Who dare say that he has nothing to fear from the judgments of God? Who can count himself safe so much as one day from his own natural feebleness, or from the wiles of Satan, or from human respect? And if we do rightly trust in God's favor, how can we forget that progress in virtue is a necessary condition of our remaining virtuous at all? Now this progress means simply a right knowledge of our remaining defects and a solid purpose to overcome them: something with which the vice of the Pharisee is quite incompatible. Nothing so blinds us to our own little faults as too much regard for our neighbor's big ones. Doubtless it would have been just as difficult for the Pharisee to correct his harshness of voice, or his lofty bearing, or his patronizing airs as to overcome his great sin of pride itself; and such is the case with many of us. The beam in our neighbor's eye looks so shocking that we quite forget that we have quite a squint in our own eye from various little motes in it.

Be certain, therefore, brethren, that, if you find

hard feelings in your heart toward sinners, you have no long journey to make before you discover the capital sin of pride in your own. Why can we not leave judgment to God, and treat poor sinners after our Lord's example, praying and suffering for them? I do not mean to say that we should forget to mention to them the awful chastisements of God; indeed, a truer friend does not exist than one who warns us of our future destruction, and some, such as parents, are in duty bound to give such admonition. But in the treatment of moral maladies we should bear in mind that bitter words and harsh looks spoil good medicine. And especially should we bear in mind that we have had our own wicked days.

Let us, therefore, regard sinners with much tenderness, dropping out of our view while we deal with them our own darling selves. Let us realize that we ourselves are poor souls, quite capable, but for God's singular favor, of falling into the worst state of sinfulness.

SERMON CIX.

MORNING PRAYERS.

Two men went up into the temple to pray.—From the Gospel of the Sunday.

The lesson of this day's Gospel, my brethren, is prayer; its necessity and its humility. Our short sermon must be contented with a little corner of this great field—that is to say, morning prayers.

Suppose that your child is sick, what is your first word in the morning? It is, How is the baby this

morning? Then follows much more: I think it is a little better to-day; it seems easier; or it passed a bad night; I hope the day will be cool, for it suffers from heat. So, anxiety for your poor little child consecrates your first thoughts and words to its welfare. And do you not know that your poor soul is either sick or runs the risk of catching a deadly sickness every day you live? There are bad sights on the streets that tend to sicken it; there are snares of the devil, such as cursing and foul-talking companions, bad reading and saloons; there is a spiritual cancer within—I mean the temptation of the flesh—which can only be kept from destroying the soul's life by constant and severe treatment. Now, thoughts and words do your sick child little good; but they are the very best things for the soul, especially early in the morning. The man or woman who kneels down and says the morning prayer guards against temptation, heads off the noon-day demon, and provides that happiest of evenings, that is to say, the one which follows an innocent day.

There's a saying against braggarts and promise-breakers that "fine words butter no parsnips." It is not true of words said in charity to our neighbor or in prayer to God. Sincere words addressed to God as the day begins sweeten every morsel of food the livelong day, lighten every burden and weaken every temptation. Why, then, are you so careless about morning prayers? It can only be because you do not appreciate your spiritual weakness or you do not care what becomes of your soul before bedtime. But somebody might say: Father, can't you tell us something to make the morning prayers easy? It is very hard to remember them, and then it is so pleasant to get

even five minutes' more sleep, especially in the winter time; and, again, I am always in a hurry to get off to work, etc. Now you might as well ask me to tell you something to make you relish a good wash and a clean shirt. If a man does not hate dirt, it is preaching up the chimney to try to make him love to be clean. Prayer cleans the heart. Prayer clothes the soul with the grace of God. Prayer brings down God. Prayer drives away the devil. Or, I might rather say, that for a clean heart, and in order to get the grace of God, and in order to vanquish temptation, prayer is simply and indispensably necessary.

Once a man came to me and said: Father, for years I was addicted to habitual vice of the worst kind (and here he named a fearful sin), but I began some time ago to say the Litany of the Blessed Virgin every morning and the Litany of Jesus every night, and this practice has entirely cured me of that dreadful habit. Some such story as that, my brethren, every man must tell before he can say that he is delivered from sin.

For my own part, I look upon regular morning prayers as a plain mark of predestination to eternal life. "Ask and you shall receive; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you," is our Lord's promise to those that pray; and the best prayer is the morning prayer. Be ready, therefore, to correct yourself for omitting it. The day you forget it go without something you like to eat, put a nickel in the poor-box, double up your night prayers, make a special request to your guardian angel to get you up in good time for morning prayer the following morning. For the "Our Father," "Hail Mary," "Apostles' Creed," "Confiteor," and Acts of Faith,

Hope, Sorrow, and Charity, that you say in the morning will in the end give you a happy death and the kingdom of heaven.

SERMON CX.

FEAST OF ST. MARY MAGDALEN.

Many sins are forgiven her, because she loved much.—GOSPEL OF THE DAY.

My dear brethren, no one who has faith can fail to be more or less anxious as to whether he will in the end save his soul. We all know that our faith alone will not save us; that faith, as St. James tells us, without works is dead. And we know that everything depends on the last moment; that as the tree falls, so will it lie for all eternity. So we tremble to think that perhaps that last moment will find us with our sins unforgiven, and all unprepared to meet our Judge; and that, in spite of our having borne the name of Christ, we may be then cast away from his presence into the outer darkness for ever.

Some people, I know, have a very simple way of reassuring themselves about this all-important matter. They think that, of course, when they come to die they will send for the priest; then, if he gets there in time, of course there can be no question about their salvation. And even if he does not, perhaps they would not altogether despair; certainly their friends will not despair of them. God, they think, will not utterly cast off those who have always believed in him; their prayers and those of their friends

will certainly obtain them a place in purgatory, and at last they will save their souls, at least by fire.

But, after all, do not even the most confident of us sometimes have a fear that even the last sacraments may not make our salvation absolutely sure? The last sacraments are not so very different from the others we have received before; and do we always feel fully prepared to die after every Communion which we make? No, there is a haunting fear that something is not right which pursues us even at the altar-rail; we would give much if we could only do something which would take it away altogether.

Let us not be troubled because we have this fear; it is better not to be entirely free from it; above all, let us not stay away from the sacraments because we have it. If we stay away in any case except that of known and certain mortal sin which is not forgiven, we shall only make matters worse. But still this fear is generally a sign of something wrong; it does not altogether come from humility, or from the desire of salvation. It comes from a want of something which we ought to have; from a want of the greatest of all virtues, of that which includes all others, and brings all others with it—from a want of the love of God. Not an entire want of it, but a want of strength in it, a want of affection; a want of that feeling which we have for our friends, and which, above all, we should have for the greatest and best of all.

Yes, perfect love, as St. John tells us, casts out fear. It is the short cut out of all these worries, difficulties, and anxieties which all who are not hardened sinners must have without it. It was the direct and simple road which St. Mary Magdalen took in

escaping from sin. She followed the Friend of sinners as he went on his mission of mercy; she saw the miracles of his power and goodness; she saw the love for men which shone in his face and inspired his every word and action, and her heart was touched and melted. She took it away at once and for ever from all those vain things to which it had been attached and gave it truly and entirely to him who had made it, and who had come in sorrow and suffering to win back his own. And her many sins were forgiven because she loved much; because all the powers of earth and of hell cannot put an obstacle between God and the soul that loves him as he should be loved.

If we would only do as she did; if we would put away all these bargainings about just how much we are bound to give to God, and how much we can safely keep for ourselves; if we would love him as she did, not with a mere passing sentiment, but with that devotion and self-sacrificing affection which it is so easy sometimes to give to a mere creature; if we would let him, as he wishes, into our hearts as our dearest and best, and make everything else give place, then fear would pass away, and we should say, "Let God take me when he will; let me suffer what my sins deserve, but surely he will not keep me from loving him." Yes, my brethren, to love God is the one thing necessary; to love him is to save our souls.

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. 1 *Cor. xv.* 1–10. Brethren: I make known unto you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand: by which also you are saved, if you hold fast after what manner I preached to you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all, which I also received: how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures: and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures: and that he was seen by Cephas, and after that by the eleven. Then was he seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen by James, then by all the apostles. And last of all, he was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace in me hath not been void

GOSPEL. *St. Mark vii.* 31–37. At that time: Jesus going out of the borders of Tyre, came by Sidon to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the territories of Decapolis. And they bring to him one that was deaf and dumb; and they besought him to lay his hand upon him. And taking him aside from the multitude, he put his fingers into his ears, and spitting, he touched his tongue: and looking up to heaven, he groaned, and said to him: Ephpheta, which is, Be opened. And immediately his ears

were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right. And he charged them that they should tell no man. But the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it. And so much the more did they wonder, saying: He hath done all things well; he hath made both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

SERMON CXI.

WANT OF CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

He hath done all things well.—St. Mark vii. 37.

The spectators of the double miracle related in this day's Gospel were filled with admiration at our Lord's power and goodness; they could not help exclaiming, "He doth all things well" Would to God, brethren, that such a sentiment of our Lord's love and power filled our hearts! Confidence in God, however, is the very virtue many Christians lack most. True, we say and believe that God is infinitely good—that he is mercy itself. But such language is very indefinite and may express a very dim conception. It is something like saying that a stone is very hard or that water is very wet. We are apt to form pictures of God's attributes in our minds, just as a painter may make a portrait of some historical personage he never saw; many of our notions of God are fancy portraits, all imagination.

But just think of the actual grounds of our confidence in our Blessed Lord. Just realize that this wonderful being is filled with the tenderest human love for the worst of us, and has all the divine power at his command—being both man and God— to make

good his love by bringing about our spiritual and temporal welfare. The Incarnation is the divine Mercy made man for the love of us. Can we suppose that such a being, having begun the good work of our salvation by giving us the true religion, will leave anything undone, that we will let him do, to bring us to the kingdom of heaven? Do you think that such a loving Father would teach us, his children, A B C except with the set purpose of going clean through to X Y Z? Just think, that it positively never happened that any wretched sinner, however degraded, ever implored our Lord's forgiveness and was rejected; nay, that he himself secretly inspires sinners with their grief and horror for their evil ways, and then imparts forgiveness in return for his own gift. The fact is that the question is not whether God will forgive us, but whether we will let him do it. In a word, this infinitely good and infinitely powerful being is bent and determined that we shall enjoy perfect happiness, world without end.

What a wonder, then, that we can treat our Lord in our cold-hearted way! Scrupulous persons treat him as if he were a tyrant; lukewarm Christians treat him like a stepfather; obstinate sinners treat him with open contempt. The practise of prayer, the reception of the sacraments and other aids of religion—we treat them as school-children do their lessons: we do it all because we are afraid of the consequences if we don't. Considering how much God loves us his service should come as easy to us as breathing the air; it should be the element in which we live. If our faith were a little more practical God's loveliness would be as plain to us as the open day and the sun in the heavens.

Furthermore, and this is still more practical, lack of confidence in God is why we repine at his visitations. It is easy enough to say, be resigned to the will of God, but how can we be content to suffer unless we are penetrated with confidence in the divine goodness? Brethren, you know how we sometimes take medicine. We wrap it up in a pleasant-flavored wafer or hide it in a spoonful of sugar, and down it goes and we never taste its bitterness. So a lively confidence in God, if we only had enough of it, is the sweetness to wrap around the bitter things of life. Temptations, long and wearisome poverty, ill-health, unpleasant companions in the household—these and other such trials are the bitter pills of the soul; when we fairly realize that God means them for our spiritual good we can bear them with patience, even with thankfulness.

Did you ever hear of the witch-hazel, and how people used to fancy that a crooked branch of it thrown into the air would fall on the spot where a good spring of water could be found? Well, the witch-hazel of the Christian soul is just this question: How much confidence have you in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ for you? If that does not reveal the hidden springs of your heart and bring the waters of love gushing forth, then that heart is hopelessly dry.

SERMON CXII.

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

WHY do Catholics pay so much honor to the Virgin Mary? Are they not doing an injury to her Son

by over-honoring his Mother? What is the reason, the doctrine, of the Catholic's devotion to Mary?

Very fair questions, brethren; questions which you should be ready to answer with intelligence and kindness. So that now, as we approach the Feast of Our Lady's Assumption into heaven, let us renew our faith in her dignity. What, then, does the Catholic faith teach us about her? It teaches us that she is the Mother of God; and further, that, on account of the foreseen merits of her Son, she was preserved from the stain of original sin; that she was always a virgin; and that it is lawful and profitable to ask her prayers. Such are the articles of faith concerning the Blessed Virgin.

Once you know something about her Son's divinity you easily perceive her dignity of Mother of God. Her title of Mother of God plainly rests upon the fact that her Son is God. Jesus Christ is God; his nature is divine and his person is divine. And here you must bear in mind the distinction between nature and person. He has the nature, being, essence of God. And he has the person of God; for our Saviour is God the Son, second person of the Most Holy Trinity. What, then, is human about him? for we know that he is as truly man as he is truly God. The answer is that he has a human nature as well as a divine nature. He became man; and he did so by taking human nature from Mary, his Mother. But, you ask again, is he a human person also? No, for we have seen that he is the divine person, God the Son. There cannot be two persons in Christ. He is but a single person, one individual, and that is divine. So that the divine personality of the Son of God takes human nature and unites it to

the divine nature. The one divine person whose name is Christ, and who is of both divine and human nature, has no human personality, but divine.

And this is the Son of Mary. Is she not the Mother of our Lord, personally his Mother? Can any one be a mother and not be mother of a person? Is he not personally her son? What a dignity! What a mysterious and wonderful eminence, to be mother of the divine person of the Son of God made man. No wonder that we honor her; although we know full well that all she has of dignity and sanctity she has by no power of her own, but by gift of God, and that she is purely a human being. Those who do not honor Mary fail to appreciate the majesty of Christ; fail to understand the doctrine of the Incarnation; fail to grasp the immensity of the divine love in God becoming man.

No wonder, then, that God should have saved her from the taint of Adam's sin, should have preserved her a spotless virgin, should have saved her pure body from the grave's filth by the Assumption into heaven. The Angel Gabriel tells us what Mary is: "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and thou shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High. . . . The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, and therefore the Holy (One) that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Now, brethren, to be a mother is to hold an office. It is to exercise by divine right the highest powers committed to a human being. What wonderful rights a mother possesses! An affectionate alle-

giance is due her from her son: an obedience instinctive, sacred, supreme; a reverential and hearty loyalty which arouses the noblest emotions in the hardest heart and gives birth to heroic deeds even in men of the weakest natures. A mother is entitled to her son's love by the most sacred of all obligations. Well, just think of it: our Blessed Lord was, and is yet, bound to his Mother by that imperative divine law; he was, and is yet, subject to the sweetest and, for a noble nature, the most resistless impulse to do his Mother's will and to make her happy. He owes her love, obedience, reverence, friendship, support, companionship, sympathy. And he that doth all things well, would he not do his whole duty as Son, would he not be a model Son? Would he not grant her lightest wish while he lived with her on earth, will he not gladly do so now in heaven?

Hence our Lord Jesus Christ spent nearly his whole life in his Mother's immediate company, consenting to postpone for her sake his Father's work of publishing his divinity and preaching his Gospel. Hence he worked his first miracle at her request at the wedding of Cana. Hence he inspired her to prophecy that all generations would call her blessed. Hence, too, our Lord has instilled into every Christian heart some little glow of his own deep filial love for her.

In truth, brethren, whatever Christ's Mother is to him by nature, that she is to us by adoption. Just in proportion to our union with him are we bound to her. And if we wish to know him well we can study in no better school than his Mother's. If we wish to love him tenderly, her maternal heart can

best teach us how. And if we have favors to ask him we shall be glad, if we are not too self-conceited, to secure her prayers to assist us.

SERMON CXIII.

GRATITUDE.

My brethren, we have had a word to say before this about the vice of ingratitude, and of how mean a vice it is, especially in a Christian. Now let us consider the opposite virtue—gratitude. It is, to be sure, one of the little virtues. Yet how can we call any class of virtues little? No doubt there are, strictly speaking, grades of merit very much higher one above the other. But that is not so much from the action done in each case as from the motive that inspires the action. One saves a man's life for the love of money; another gives a glass of cold water for the love of God. The glass of water is nothing compared to a human life; yet the glass of water will be rewarded for all eternity, and the saving of the human life is paid for as we pay for a load of coal. Brethren, beware of thinking there is anything to be called little that has to do with God and eternal life; and always bear in mind that, by practising little virtues with an earnest purpose to please God, your merit is according to your heart, and not according to your hand.

I do not intend to speak specially, just now, of gratitude to God; but between man and man gratitude is one of those gentle virtues that increase our fondness for each other. Gratitude is a short cut to sincere and lasting friendship. And if a super-

natural motive inspires one's gratitude to his friends, then a holy friendship is the result. Some people complain that they have no friends. I think they are most to blame themselves. Have they never had a favor done them? Why, every one of us has had a score of favors done him every day of his life. Those who bear it in mind, who say a word of hearty thanks, who watch a chance to do a favor in return, never lack friends. Brethren, never forget a favor. Return it if you can, at least in part; but at any rate never forget it. *Feel* grateful at least; say a thankful word; offer up a prayer for your benefactors now and then. The best use we can make of our memories is to remember our benefactors. Favors done and favors gratefully remembered are the two halves of a happy life. It would be only simple justice if we looked on gratitude as we do on a just debt; for gratitude pays debts first in good-will, and before long in a more substantial manner. You know that an honest debtor will always try to save a little from day to day to pay his debts. So we can do a little from time to time by way of instalments, so to speak; we can say a daily prayer for our benefactors, write an occasional letter, pay a visit now and then, often praise them to our friends.

Of course, those who have done us the greatest favors are entitled to the deepest gratitude. Now, who has done so much for us as our parents? Certainly, next to God, our parents stand first in the list of our benefactors. Yet many, especially after they have married and settled down in their own families, are wanting in gratitude to their parents. Married persons who are badly treated by their own children

should sometimes ask themselves if it be not in punishment for their forgetfulness of their own parents. Of course, when we are in middle life, what was done for us in childhood seems very far away; it was diffused over many years; it was a regular habit and course of life; it was bound up in our parents' own happiness. But let us bear in mind, all the same, how true and deep the love that inspired it; how unwearied the patience; how self-forgetful the devotion of our parents, and let us seek every chance to make their last years happy.

Brethren, shall I say a word about gratitude due to us of the sanctuary? Has not some priest done you a favor; converted you by a sermon, inspired you to perseverance by his advice in the confessional, soothed your sick and weary heart, or reconciled you to a dreary burden? If so, you ought to pray for him, and especially for your pastors.

But gratitude to God is, of course, the first and best of all. From him we have received all, and, having forfeited every favor, again and again received them back from the divine bounty.

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. 2 *Cor. iii.* 4–9. Brethren: Such confidence we have, through Christ towards God. Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God. Who also hath made us fit ministers of the new testament, not in the letter, but in the Spirit. For the letter killeth; but the Spirit giveth life. Now if the ministration of death, engraven with letters upon stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which is done away: how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather in glory? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more the ministration of justice aboundeth in glory.

GOSPEL. *St. Luke x.* 23–37. At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them: and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them. And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him, and saying: Master, what must I do to possess eternal life? But he said to him: What is written in the law? how readest thou? He answering, said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself." And he said to him: Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said to Jesus: And who is my neighbor? And Jesus answering, said: A cer-

tain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away, leaving him half dead. And it happened that a certain priest went down the same way, and seeing him, he passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan being on his journey came near him; and seeing him was moved with compassion. And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine: and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said: Take care of him: and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee. Which of these three in thy opinion was neighbor to him that fell among the robbers? But he said: He that showed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him: Go and do thou in like manner.

SERMON CXIV.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

Go and do thou in like manner.—St. Luke x. 37.

How few of us, brethren, are really naturally of a self-sacrificing disposition! How few actually enjoy, for example, the offices of the sick-room, or so much as a little visit of condolence to an afflicted friend!

That is why our Blessed Lord, in this day's Gospel, has given us the beautiful parable of the good Samaritan. Although a heretic and schismatic against the law of Moses, he is chosen as a model

because he had a tender, compassionate heart, and was willing to put himself to trouble and expense for his neighbor's welfare.

The corporal works of mercy, brethren, are the easiest of the ways to the love of God. People are fond of admiring the members of religious orders, who, for the love of God, serve the sick and the aged, the insane and the orphans; often forgetting that if this is good as a life-work for them, it is not bad as an occasional practise of virtue for us living in the world. All around us there are shoulders bending under weary burdens and hearts breaking with insupportable cares: yes, even in one's own household. How often do men deny their wives the pleasure of their company; when Sunday comes, going off with any chance companions and leaving the poor mother to mind the children, to miss Mass, and sit lonely at home the livelong day. How very often do young men think of taking anybody's sisters to some respectable place of amusement rather than their own sisters! I think that if a spiritual thermometer were dipped into such men's hearts they would be found pretty near the freezing point.

But, brethren, the sick-room—ah! that is the place on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho where men and women are oftenest found lying in the direst distress. Have you ever been very sick? If so, you know the value of a little good nursing. A man who was just recovering from a very dangerous sickness told me once that when his head was burning with the fever he would willingly have given a hundred thousand dollars for the cooling, restful relief he enjoyed every time the nurse rearranged the pillows for him.

And if you cannot be a regular nurse for the sick, there is no reason why you should not pay an occasional visit to the sick-room. You can spend a pleasant quarter of an hour in cheerful conversation. You can relieve some poor, weary watcher, so that she or he may get a little rest. You can take the ailing child from the worn-out mother's arms and let her lie down and rest her stiffened limbs, or go to church to refresh her anxious soul. You can bring some little delicacy to soothe the sick person's palate. You can read some prayers beside the sick-bed morning or night; for we all know that in time of illness it is almost impossible to pray one's self. You can lend a hand to set things to rights, to cook a meal of victuals, or wash the dishes, or run an errand to the drug-store or grocery; and ever and always you can say a word of comfort, of hope, of resignation to the divine will—words cheap to give but precious to receive.

And when at last death is come your presence may be of the deepest comfort. Then is the time to come forward promptly and help to lay out the Christian corpse; to set up for a night beside that strange, silent guest in the coffin; and, when you find two or three gathered about it, to have the courage to lead in reciting the rosary for the soul's happy repose.

I know, brethren, that there are many kind hearts who zealously practise these lovely virtues. But there are others, especially among the men, who nearly quite forget them. And others still who do them grudgingly, and only after many entreaties. To obtain a kind act from an unwilling heart, and after encountering many excuses, is like blowing a

dying fire : before you see the bright coals your face is pretty well covered with ashes and cinders.

Brethren, let us not be put to shame by the Samaritan. When confronted with persons suffering from poverty, sickness, death, or any misfortune, do like the Samaritan : forget all about their nationality, or acquaintanceship, or religion. Say something or do something in charity and for the love of God : your neighbor's deepest gratitude and God's sure reward will amply repay you.

SERMON CXV.

OUR NEIGHBORS.

Which of these three, in thy opinion, was neighbor to him that fell among robbers? But He said, he that showed mercy to him.—GOSPEL OF THE DAY.

WE are taught in the Gospel of to-day to love our neighbors as ourselves. Now, if we have this love it shows itself in deeds. If, when we see our neighbor in distress, we pass by, thinking some one else may help him, but *we* cannot, we are like the proud priest and the Levite, not like the good Samaritan. Our Lord, after describing the charity of this Samaritan, says : "Go and do thou in like manner." We can not pass by our neighbor when he is in extreme necessity without sin ; and if his necessity be great we must help him, at least out of our abundance. It is a mistake to think that we are free of obligation in this matter. St. John says: "He that hath the substance of this world and shall see his brother in need,

and shall shut up his bowels from him, how doth the charity of God abide in him?"

Are not all men creatures of God? Are not all men redeemed by the Blood of Christ? Does God give more of this world's goods to one man than to another because he loves one more than another? Not at all. The poorest in this world's goods may be rich in God's grace. It is plain, then, that if God has charity for all men, we cannot have his grace if we do not exercise charity towards all, and particularly our neighbor in distress. We must love those whom God loves if we love God, and this love must be *active*—"not in word nor in tongue," says St. John, "but in deed and in truth."

We all pray to God for mercy; but if we would find mercy we must show mercy. "Blessed are the merciful," says our Lord, "for they shall obtain mercy." But, says St. James, "judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy." Mercy shall be granted to the merciful, but it shall be denied to the hard of heart. "Deal thy bread to the hungry," says Isaias, "and bring the needy and the harborless into thy house. Then thou shalt call and the Lord shall hear."

St. Jerome says: "I have never known a merciful man to have a bad death." The word of God encourages us "to redeem our sins with alms and our iniquities with works of mercy to the poor." It says further: "For alms deliver from all sin and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness." We are taught also in Holy Scripture that Christ considers as done to himself what we do for the poor, but that if we refuse to help those in distress it is as if charity were refused to Christ himself. The

sentence which shall decide our eternal happiness or woe will be according to our behavior towards our neighbor in distress.

Let us take care not to be deaf to the cries of the suffering poor; let us rather embrace with affection the lovely virtue of mercy. Bishop Challoner says: "It was mercy which brought the Son of God down from heaven to us, and it is mercy which carries us up to him." He calls "mercy the favorite daughter of the great King." The reward of the merciful will be very great. "He that hath mercy on the poor lendeth to the Lord, and he will repay him."

Those of us who labor in the sacred ministry and those who do work in the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul meet continually with persons whose distress appeals most powerfully to our charity. How we wish the offerings for the poor were more generous! How we wish God would inspire pious Christians to send in donations for the poor! If you would sometimes send into the church-office envelopes containing money for the poor, what good use we could make of it, and how it would call down the mercy of God upon your souls! Brethren, we have Jesus Christ with us in the persons of the poor.

SERMON CXVI.

OCCASIONS OF SIN.

Who is my neighbor?—FROM THE GOSPEL OF THE SUNDAY.

THIS is a very important question, my brethren. We depend much for our happiness on the kind of persons who live around us and on how they feel to-

wards us. Our Lord answers the question by the famous and touching parable of the Good Samaritan. By that parable he teaches us kindness of heart; he makes that the mark of true neighborly conduct. The good neighbor is the friendly and benevolent one. But may we not turn the question around and learn another good lesson from it? I think we can. The Gospel is like a piece of good cloth. You know when a wise mother buys some cloth to make the children clothes she will get a piece that, as they say, will do to turn—that is, when one side is worn out you can rip up the garment and make it over again with the inside turned outside, and so it will last quite a while longer. So we may learn, perhaps, another lesson from the question in the Gospel by reversing it and asking, "Who is *not* my neighbor?"

The saloon-keeper is not your neighbor. Geographically speaking, no doubt he is your neighbor. He takes care to be handy to you. He is on the ground-floor of the big tenement-house you live in, so that you must pass his door to get to your own. Or he is on the corner you must turn twenty times a day. If nearness were the only mark of a neighbor, the saloon-keeper is very neighborly indeed. But, morally speaking, and in the meaning of our Lord's parable, he is perhaps the last man who can claim to be your neighbor. Yet many honest fellows treat the saloon-keeper not only as their neighbor, but as a partner in their business. They do the hard work; the workingman's share in the partnership is to bend under the heavy hod in the hot sun, or to strike with the heavy sledge on the rocks, or to be half-stifled the livelong day in the hot factory; the other partner has for his share of the work only to smile

and pass the bottle. You know which one gets the bulk of the profits; or if you do not, the workingman's wife and family know it all too well. How many foolish men are there who have taken this bad neighbor into partnership the most confidential, and not only give him most of their money in return for worse than nothing, but have made him, besides, the managing partner of their leisure, their friendships, and their politics! As to the sorrows that are bred by the saloon-keeper's traffic, he manages to escape them for a time; and may God give him the grace to repent of his sins and fly from their occasion—that is, change his business—that he may escape the divine wrath in the future.

Another very bad neighbor, and one very unworthy of that name, is a certain class of newsdealers. I say a certain class, for I hope that not all newsdealers are alike. But there are very many of them who are guilty of the loss of human souls by selling periodicals and books which can only corrupt the mind and heart of the reader. I ask you, Christian parents, what do you think of those who dress out their windows with bad pictures to lure passionate youth to the early wreck of soul and body? What do you think of persons who actually make a living in selling journals which are but the pictured proceedings of the police courts? O my brethren! how often is the grace of a good confession and Communion destroyed by a few minutes' bad reading! How many there are whose first mortal sin has been some act of youthful depravity suggested by what was bought at a newsdealer's! Such newsdealers hold Satan's certificates to teach the science of perdition. What need has the Evil Spirit to fear

the Catholic Church and Catholic school as long as he is not hindered from laying his snares for youthful virtue in every direction, as long as the laws against obscene literature are a dead-letter? Therefore, let Catholic parents furnish their families with good reading, both secular and religious; let them take at least one Catholic paper, and let them patronize and direct their children to patronize newsdealers who do not sell dangerous matter.

Of course there are other bad neighbors, such as those who invite you to a public dance, or a moonlight excursion, or a Sunday picnic, or a low theatre. But I think you will agree with me that the commonest vices are intemperance and impurity, and that our worst enemies are those two bad neighbors, the saloon-keeper and the vender of impure literature.

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. *Gal. iii.* 16-22. Brethren: To Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed. He saith not, "And to his seeds," as of many: but as of one, "And to thy seed," who is Christ. Now this I say, that the testament which was confirmed by God, the law which was made after four hundred and thirty years, doth not disannul, to make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise. But God gave it to Abraham by promise. Why then was the law? It was set because of transgressions, until the seed should come, to whom he made the promise, being ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now, a mediator is not of one: but God is one. Was the law then against the promises of God? God forbid. For if there had been a law given which could give life, verily justice should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

GOSPEL. *St. Luke xvii.* 11–19. At that time: As Jesus was going to Jerusalem, he passed through the midst of Samaria in Galilee. And as he entered into a certain town, there met him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off: and lifted up their voice, saying: Jesus, master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said: Go, show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was cleansed, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God; and he fell on his face, before his feet, giving thanks: and this was a Samaritan.

And Jesus answering, said: Were there not ten made clean? and where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger. And he said to him: Arise, go thy way, for thy faith hath made thee whole.

SERMON CXVII.

THANKSGIVING.

Where are the nine?—St. Luke xvii. 11.

Of the ten lepers whose cure is related in this day's Gospel, only one returned to give thanks, and he was a Samaritan; the others went their way; they were cured indeed of their dreadful disease, but disgraced by our Lord's sad question, Where are the nine?

Thanksgiving, brethren, should follow after God's mercies to us, not only as a matter of justice, but in order to secure the effect of those mercies themselves. Just as, in our bodily life, in order to get the benefit of fresh air, breathing *in* must be followed by breathing *out*, so the giving of thanks must follow the reception of all divine favors. The grace of God is to the soul what the breath is to the body; and the body, to live, must not only draw the air in, but give it forth again to make room for new and fresher air. So in the life of our souls we breathe in God's grace and we breathe out thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving is furthermore a matter of justice. The holiest debt we owe to God or man is the debt of thanks. Every honest man gives thanks for favors received from other men, and every upright soul gives thanks to God. It is the most indispensable of

all our obligations, because it is the least that we can do. In all our traffic with heaven, gratitude is the only coin we can mint ourselves. Thanksgiving is that part of our sanctification necessarily our own. Well, brethren, if this be really true—and who can deny it?—then a great many of us are insolvent debtors of the worst kind. Now you hear it said sometimes that the man who does not pay his debts is as bad as a thief, and in many cases this is perfectly true. So the difference between an open sinner and a thankless Christian is that between a thief and a man who by his own fault does not pay his debts. Indeed, we sometimes feel as if God ought to thank us for the favor we do him by condescending to serve him. Confession and Communion and daily prayer, forgiveness of injuries and resisting temptations so puff us up with conceit that we are apt to blame God because in view of our holiness he does not exempt us from the ordinary ills of life!

As a matter of fact it is with God and us as with a storekeeper and his customer. You know why a man cannot get trust at a store; it is because he was trusted before and didn't pay his debts. Now pretty nearly all the pay that God asks for his favors is that we shall give him thanks, and if we will not do that much he can hardly think us worthy of his further bounty. If we do give thanks he multiplies his favors; for he is determined to keep us in his debt, and as fast as we return thanks so much the faster does he lavish his love upon us.

So when we ask why we suffer this miserable stagnation in our spiritual career, perhaps the true answer would be that we are members of a big multiple of that original thankless nine.

Oh! let us thank God that we have the blessings of the true religion, that he is our Father, Jesus Christ our Redeemer, and the Blessed Virgin Mary our Mother. Let us thank him for his gracious promise of the everlasting joys of Paradise. For these unspeakable favors our thanks should be ceaseless.

Let us give thanks, too, in our fervent morning prayers that we have escaped the dangers of the night, and in our night prayers that we have been saved from the noon-day demon. When we rise from our meals let us offer a word of thanks, making at least the sign of the cross, blessing God for the health he gives us and our family. Let us thank him for our afflictions—yes, even for temptations; for the pains we suffer thereby are the growing-pains of the soul. Especially after receiving Holy Communion let us give long and heartfelt thanks for all God's dealing with us; for we have then received the greatest of all his gifts, his only-begotten Son.

SERMON CXVIII.

SHAMELESSNESS IN SINNING.

There met him three men that were lepers, who stood afar off and lifted up their voice, saying: Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.—THE GOSPEL OF THE SUNDAY.

LEPROSY, my brethren, is often spoken of in Holy Writ, and is considered a type of sin. It is a loathsome and contagious disease, and when a man was so unhappy as to contract it, besides being driven away by the Mosaic law, he fled in very shame from the

company of others. So it is with the common run of sinners; one of their direst sufferings is shame, from which comes such remorse, such self-detestation, such reasonable envy of the happy state of the innocent, that, standing afar off, the poor sinner at last lifts up his voice and cries to our Lord for mercy. So there is always some chance for a poor sinner while he is ashamed of himself; where there is shame there is hope.

But, brethren, it happens in our times that there are many sinners without shame. Many great sins are done almost as a matter of course, and some even made matter of jest, perhaps of boast. Need I mention them? Time was that if a man wished to see a vulgar play he was forced to creep up some dark alley; now he may go to a filthy opera in a coach and four, and with the lords of the land, ay, even the ladies of the land. When you and I were boys there was but one commonly known illustrated paper with immoral pictures and bad reading matter; the newsdealers now hang their stands all over with them, and young men, and even young women, buy and read them without a blush. You and I can remember when it was a disgrace for a man to idle behind a bar-room counter and get his living from the drunkard and spendthrift. These men make our laws now. It used to be the pride of a young man to get to work as soon as possible to help the old folks along; we hear now too often of hearty young men shamelessly dependent on their parents. And we know of too many parents who are not ashamed of habits of intoxication nor of cursing in the hearing of their little ones. And how many mothers of families are there whose harsh voices are heard all over the neigh-

borhood, quarrelling with their husbands and scolding their children! Time was when a drunken woman was what Scripture says she is, "a great wrath, and her shame shall not be hid." Now they publicly send their little boys and girls to the saloon for beer.

Do I exaggerate? Am I not, on the contrary, forced for decency's sake to pass over other shameless sins, which all but the blind and deaf know of among us? Indeed, dear brethren, the word of God is true now as of yore that sinners "preach their shame like Sodom." The lepers laugh at their leprosy. They run in among us to blight us. Their disease, that blight which withers the soul with eternal decay, they rub off upon us. They do it by bad example, by laughing at the simple virtue of good Christians, by jesting and mockery, by bullying, by ill-gotten riches and ill-gotten power.

But we must remember that they are all this time really-sinners, and worse than ordinary sinners, because without shame. Here, then, is our first duty: not to permit human respect, worldly position, or a bullying tongue to silence our love of God's honor, our detestation of what does it harm and our pity for the sinner himself. A good remedy against shamelessness in sinning is just a little plain talk. If sometimes, instead of laughing at a vile jest, we should say, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself," we should please God and save souls. In the family, especially, parents should create a sound family opinion about places and persons and reading and amusements and all things else that lead to sin: bad theatres, moonlight excursions, public balls, liquor stores, and beer-gardens. A little plain talk, accompanied by good example and much prayer on

the part of good Christians, will do a great deal, if not to cure the leprosy of sin in those who have it, at any rate to keep the lepers standing afar off from the uncontaminated and innocent.

SERMON CXIX.

DANGERS OF VENIAL SIN.

I know thy works, that thou art neither hot nor cold.—APOCALYPSE iii. 15.

IT is plain that these words of Holy Writ describe a person in the state of venial sin; or rather one who is in that state wilfully and quite careless about it. Now, my brethren, I do not wish to make you scrupulous, but there is no mistake about this; all experience shows that persons careless of venial sins are pretty sure to slip down into mortal sins. Indeed (on the other hand), about the only ones who manage to keep clear of mortal sins are those who are fearful of falling into venial sins. Save the pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves; or, waste the pennies and the dollars will waste themselves. Scripture applies this as follows: "He that despiseth small things shall fall little by little." If one keeps the dogs and goats out of the garden the cows will have small chance to get in. Keep a watch on the venial sins and the mortal sins will keep out of sight.

And does it not stand to reason that, if one is habituated to look keenly after little sins, it is morally impossible for him to be carried away by great sins?

If you are anxious and distressed because your soul seems less pure, less holy, less beautiful than it ought to be, with what horror will you be filled at the bare thought of becoming a regular slave of the evil spirit! And how much easier is it, brethren, to keep a sharp lookout for a few little trifles, rather than to be always running the risk of eternal woe!

And now I will tell you of some of those who are full of venial sins, and pretty sure to be sooner or later in a state of mortal sin. Those who are content with their Easter duty—a soul content with a spiritual meal once in twelve months cannot have very vigorous spiritual health or a very strong appetite for divine things. Those who are often late for Mass—once in a while they will miss it altogether, and for no particular reason, except that they feel it a great bore to have to do anything for the love of God. Those who continually neglect their morning prayers; even though they make an effort to say their night prayers, they have omitted deliberately the most necessary religious act of the day. Those who are addicted to idleness; for that is one of the worst occasions of sin, both mortal and venial. Those who are stingy, especially to their near relatives and the poor; to love money is to love something our Lord has a great contempt for. Those who are touchy and resentful; for they cannot live in peace with anybody, and peace is necessary for our spiritual welfare. Those who tell improper stories, and are fond of hearing others do it; but as to this class, I am not sure but that they are in mortal sin already: "Can a man put fire in his bosom and not be burned?" Those who are fond of gossip; for God will not permit us to trifle with our neighbor's good

name, and gossipers and tale-bearers are often not in mortal sin, only because, malicious as they are, they are just as stupid. Those who, though they don't get drunk, yet hang around saloons, and those who are fond of drinking and treating; and this is a case, my brethren, where only judgment-day will tell where venial sin ends and mortal sin begins.

Dear brethren, the only really safe way of dealing with God is the generous way. Arouse yourself with high and noble motives to be a real friend of God, faithful and true in things little as well as great, and religion will seem something new and ever so much pleasanter to you. Otherwise you will not have the comfort of being sure of God's friendship at all. You may be like an old lady who once told me very sorrowfully about how her daughter died. "I was watching at her bedside," she said, "and, after a long spell of suffering, she dropped off at last into a gentle slumber. I turned down the lamp and stepped softly into the next room, waiting to hear her call me when she woke up. An hour passed, another hour, a third, and still she slept on. Finally the doctor came, and so we had to wake her up. But oh! when we came to the bedside we found her dead, cold and dead, while I thought her asleep." So your soul may seem to you only sleeping, only lukewarm in God's service, only careless about your religious duties; whereas it may be all the time, if not in the very state of spiritual death—mortal sin—at least in the torpor which goes before it.

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. *Gal. v.* 16–24 Brethren: I say then, walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit: and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary one to another: so that you do not the things that you would. But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are, fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcraft, enmities, contentions, emulations, wrath, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envy, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. Of the which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity. Against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's, have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences.

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. vi.* 24–33. At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other: or he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon. Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body more than the raiment? Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value

than they? And which of you by thinking can add to his stature one cubit? And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow: they labor not, neither do they spin. And yet I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. Now if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven: how much more you, O ye of little faith? Be not solicitous therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathen seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.

SERMON CXX.

THE POVERTY OF CHRIST.

For after all these things do the heathen seek.—St. Matt. vi. 32.

In this day's Gospel our Blessed Lord would teach us that the difference between men is the difference between the objects for which they live. And he lays down the fundamental law of his kingdom, that if the chief object of one's life is the enjoyment of the things everywhere about us—eating and drinking and money and lands—he has therein a mark of belonging to the kingdom of this world. To belong to our Lord's kingdom we must live for none of these things as the end of our endeavors. We may, indeed, have and use the things of this world, but for higher purposes than the world itself can offer; as

far as any enjoyment in them is concerned, it is too trifling a matter to engage our serious pursuit.

Yet, brethren, is not the whole Christian world absorbed in seeking after what should be the heathen's peculiar treasure? Is not this the most anxious inquiry, How shall I get rich? Is not the possession of riches deemed the most enviable happiness? Is it not the best praise of an individual that he is prosperous, and of a nation that it is wealthy? What a serious lesson it is, therefore, that our Lord expresses his contempt for what is deemed the height of human wisdom among us—a contempt no less profound because so gently expressed! If—he as much as says—if you and I are to make choice of beauty, you may choose King Solomon's wardrobe with all its jewels, and I will take the new-blown lily; if you talk to me of foresight and skill in the business of life, you may admire the successful speculator, but the little sparrow is my model.

And our Lord's life was fully in accord with his doctrine. For it was of set purpose that he saw fit to lack those things that nearly all men covet most; that he was the child of a poor maiden, and the apprentice of a country carpenter; that he was a wanderer barefoot and needy about Judea, yet all the time the only-begotten Son of the Lord of all majesty; that he was seemingly a tried and convicted malefactor, and died naked and all but alone upon the gibbet, yet all the time the immortal King of ages.

The truth is that this unhappy overvaluing of the more lowly things of life is a fault deeply rooted in our fallen nature. That the eager pursuit of wealth is not compatible with God's service; that it is the peculiar province of the heathen we indeed know,

And we know that the human soul is too noble a being to expend its dearest action to purchase any perishable thing whatever. Yet very many persons who deem themselves good enough Christians are quite proud of their success in the heathen's way of life. And many other Christians fall into downright despair because God has deprived them of the things that "the heathen seek." Far be it from us indeed to underestimate the burden of poverty, or to say that it is an easy thing to suffer it. God knows that it is a terribly hard thing to be poor; to see one's family suffer actual hunger; to wander about the streets with no roof to cover one; to lie helplessly sick and be too poor to get proper food or medicine. But on the other hand it is wrong to act under such circumstances as if all were lost, or as if God hated us; that is the very time to arouse one's faith in God's love and one's reliance on his promises; to seek his consolation in the holy sacraments; to raise one's eyes hourly to his countenance by fervent prayer that he may relieve the burden, or at any rate grant patience to bear it.

Oh! how few there are who gladly and heartily choose the Kingdom of God and his justice in preference to the treasures of this world! How few there are who do so even grudgingly and doubtfully!

Yet the doctrine stands: to labor for a postponed reward is the Christian's life, and for a present reward the heathen's. To pass by a seen and present joy for the sake of an unseen joy is the Christian's wisdom. To trust the voice of an unseen benefactor—in a word, to walk in the darkness of a supernatural faith—is the fundamental virtue of our religion.

SERMON CXXI.

BROTHERLY LOVE.

But the fruit of the spirit is charity.—EPISTLE OF THE SUNDAY.

MARK these words, brethren; for they describe the Christian religion, at least as far as its practical effects are concerned. The presence of the Holy Ghost is known by a kindly disposition, a friendly feeling towards others, a longing to make others happy an affectionate sympathy for their sufferings; and all this for the love of God. So St. John says: "We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren." The necessary result of sanctifying grace is a deep attachment to our friends and a loving forgiveness towards our enemies. "For all the law," says St. Paul, "is fulfilled in one sentence: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Kindness of heart, generosity, self-forgetfulness, done to be like Jesus Christ, is the beginning and the end of our holy faith.

"I give you a new commandment," said our Lord to his disciples, "that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you love one another." Again: "By this shall men know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another." He thus tells us what his law is—fraternal charity; that is the newness of life man got from heaven above; that is the torrent of heavenly influence rushing down upon us and bearing us away upon its billows; and that is the mark set upon us by which we know ourselves, and others may know us, to be the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

But somebody might say, How about the love of God? Is not the love of God the end of all religion? Is it not our first duty to love God so strongly that we prefer him to all things else, even our nearest relatives? Is not the love of God the one absorbing duty of our lives? In answer, my brethren, I have only to say that that is but another way of looking at the same thing: for since the coming of our Lord among us God has become man, and we are born in holy baptism, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." When our Lord, true God as he was, took human nature, he took our poor nature just as it is, saving its sinfulness; and it is his blessed will that one by one every man, woman, and child in the world should personally be joined to his divine nature by baptism, and, as St. Peter says, be made partakers of the divinity he possesses. And even the poor, unbaptized heathen, they are to be gifted with this divine privilege by our love for them and our loving efforts to give it to them. Now do you not see why our Lord, his Apostles, and his church made so much of the love of one's neighbor? And do you not see that, whether you begin to love with God or with man, if you do it along with Jesus Christ, you do it with the God-man, and therefore always in God and never out of man?

Yet another might say: But, Father, what about the sacraments, and what about the practice of prayer, and what about the laws of the church? I answer by a comparison: Why do men plant and then reap a field of wheat? That they may in due time get the grain, make bread of part for themselves and families, and sell the rest to their neighbors. Now,

some may use the very old-fashioned way of thrashing out the grain by the tread of oxen, and others by the beating of the flail, and others by the great, roaring thrashing-machine. The last way is the quickest and cleanest and best. So our Lord, when he became man, invented the sacraments; he established his church as the new and best way of obtaining the ripe fruit of the Holy Spirit, and that way he commands us to use. So the man who really loves his neighbor as himself learns to do it by using our Lord's methods, the sacraments, and he cannot get along without them.

So, brethren, cultivate more and more this sweet Christian virtue of fraternal love; and especially in your families. When the children cry, when they are sickly and peevish, when others are cross and exacting, when some are dull and stupid, when the meals are too late or the food is not cooked right, when the thousand-and-one annoyances of living with others vex and harass you, remember that you are a Christian, and that loving patience, great good nature, fondness for friends—to say nothing of zeal for the conversion of poor sinners—are virtues that will win you the kingdom of heaven.

SERMON CXXII.

RELIGION FOR WEEK-DAYS.

No man can serve two masters. . . . You cannot serve God and Mammon.—GOSPEL OF THE DAY.

WHAT does our Lord mean by this, my brethren? "No man," he says, "can serve two masters."

"Why," you might perhaps answer, "I do not see any difficulty about serving two masters. What is to prevent a man, for instance, after his regular hours of work are over, from hiring himself out for the evenings to some other employer, if he has strength enough to spare? Or, if he can make such an arrangement, why should he not work for one in the morning, and another in the afternoon? And are there not, in fact, many people, teachers, for example, who give private lessons, who have a great number of employers whom they agree to serve at stated times?"

Yes, this seems true enough. It seems so true that I believe there are many people who, in spite of our Lord's statement to the contrary, divide their service between God and Mammon. They hire themselves out to the devil, or at least to the world during the week, and when Sunday comes round, and they put on their good clothes, they change their master at the same time, and, at least for the time that they are in church, read certain words out of their prayer-books, in which they offer their service to God. And they do not appear to think that there is anything strange about this. They think that, of course, decency requires that God should want part of their time for his service, and that he is quite reasonable in only asking for one day out of seven; but that he should have any claim on them during the part of the week that he does not specially reserve does not seem to occur to their minds. That is the time engaged to the other master—that is, to their worldly interests or pleasures. They find no difficulty in reconciling the service of God and Mammon at all; they can be good Christians and also

men of the world like others without the slightest trouble.

But I seem to hear some one say, "Father, are you not pushing this matter rather too far? Surely one cannot be in church or saying his prayers at home all the week. Some people may find time to come to early Mass and all the devotions, and live what you may call a pious life generally; but I have to go to my business or my family will starve. What would you have me do?"

Well, I will tell you. I do not find fault with any one for attending to his business during the week, and working as much as he is obliged to provide for himself and his family properly; but I must say, by the way, that many people, under this excuse, fall into the snare of avarice, and work early and late to hoard up riches which neither they nor their family need, and which, left to their children, is only too likely to be an occasion of sin. However, I repeat, no one is to be blamed for attending to the proper duties of his state of life; for working at his business, if it is a legitimate and useful one. But what one is to be blamed for is for attending to it as if, instead of being God's business, as it ought to be, it was no business of his at all; as if he had nothing to say about it, and his laws did not apply to it. The delusion that too many Christians are under is that their religious life and their life in the world are entirely separate concerns: that religion, morality, God's laws in general, have nothing to do with politics, business, buying or selling, or what they call practical affairs. They say, If we did not do as others do about these things, we could not get on at all; so they calmly take for granted, even, per-

haps, in the confessional, that such things have no moral aspect whatever.

This is a great delusion and a fatal blunder. A Christian has got to be a Christian first, last, and all the time; one cannot be a Catholic on Sunday, and to all intents and purposes a Protestant or an infidel during the week. If you can't get on on the principle of serving God and trying to find out and do his will on Monday as well as on Sunday, then all I have to say is, "Don't get on." I dare say there is some truth in your complaint; a man who manages his business and daily life generally, as if there was no God in the world, will probably make money faster, and have in some ways a better time, than one will who believes in God and tries to do his will. Very well, then, if you prefer this world to the next, act according to its standard Sunday, Monday, and all the time; but don't try to cut inside of it and get a pass to heaven on the ground that you have used another standard now and then.

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. *Gal. v.* 25 ; *vi.* 10. Brethren: If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another. And if a man can be overtaken in any fault, you, who are spiritual, instruct such a one in the spirit of mildness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so shall you fulfil the law of Christ. For if any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every one prove his own work, and so he shall have glory in himself only, and not in another. For every one shall bear his own burden. And let him who is instructed in the word communicate to him that instructeth him, in all good things. Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in the flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption. But he that soweth in the Spirit, of the Spirit shall reap life everlasting. And in doing good, let us not fail. For in due time we shall reap, not failing. Therefore, whilst we have time, let us do good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

GOSPEL. *St. Luke vii.* 11–16. At that time: Jesus went into a city called Naim: and there went with him his disciples, and a great multitude. And when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said to her: Weep not.

And he came near and touched the bier. (And they that carried it stood still.) And he said: Young man, I say to thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on them all: and they glorified God, saying: That a great prophet is risen up among us: and God hath visited his people.

SERMON CXXIII.

THE FRUITS OF A BAD LIFE.

Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap.—EPISTLE OF THE DAY.

ONE would think, my dear friends, that the Apostle would hardly have needed to remind any one having common sense, or even a little experience, of such an obvious truth as this. Surely no one expects, when he plants some kind of seed, to have some other kind of crop come from it. "Do men," says our Divine Lord, "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" No, we are all well aware that if we want to grow any kind of grain or fruit we must sow the seed or plant the tree which produces it.

And yet, strange to say, though we all do acknowledge this law of nature in everything outside of ourselves, we fail to apply it to ourselves, and especially to our souls. In matters simply pertaining to the body we do indeed know that the cause will produce its effect. If we sow the seed of some fatal disease in ourselves we expect it to break out and run its course; we do not believe that, as a rule, tears or even prayers are going to stop it.

But when it comes to the soul, many Christians seem to think that everything regarding it may be shifted at their own will; that they may go on for years sowing the seeds of all kinds of abominable vices in their souls, and that, later on, whenever they may desire, all this work can be undone in a moment, and those souls, which sin has rotted through and through, can be put right back where they were as they came from the baptismal font, or even set on a perfect level with those in which the seed of every virtue has been implanted and carefully nurtured from childhood.

Ah! my dear brethren, this is a great and a terrible mistake. Hear the words in which St. Paul continues: "He that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption; but he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit shall reap life everlasting."

"He that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption." Here is the great evil of sin, which repentance, however sincere, cannot utterly undo. True contrition will, no doubt, especially if accompanied by the Sacrament of Penance, take away the guilt of sin; but unless it be very intense, and accompanied by an extraordinary love of God, like that of the great saints, it will not, in releasing from guilt, remedy all the deformity which long-continued habits of vice have worked in the soul. Yes, sorrow may come in such an overflowing torrent as to break down and sweep away all obstacles in its path; but how often does it come so? To have such sorrow for sin is a rare and remarkable grace from God which the sinner has no right to expect.

All this is specially true, as the words of the Apostle teach us, of the sins of the flesh, such as drunken-

ness and impurity. The body will hang on to sin after the soul has given it up, and will drag the soul again down with it. Oh! that those who are addicted to these horrible sensual habits would realize their danger, and feel the net which the flesh has been weaving round their spirit. But no; they go on from week to week, from month to month, making, it may be, now and then a feeble effort to escape; but too often it can be seen after each confession, though they are indeed on their feet again, that the odds against them are greater than ever, and that their weapons are dropping out of their hands.

Brethren, grace is powerful, surely; but you are much mistaken if you think it is going to destroy and make of no effect the law of nature. Rouse yourselves to the combat which is before you while there is yet time; for the time may come, and perhaps sooner than you think, when the corruption of the flesh will quench the feeble spark of contrition which God has hitherto given you, and in which lies your only hope.

SERMON CXXIV.

SINS OF PARENTS.

And Jesus said Young man, I say to thee, arise.—St. Luke viii 14.

Many mourning parents, brethren, are represented by the poor widow of Naim, told of in this day's Gospel; and their mourning is for sons dead in mortal sin. These are indeed days of many and

various vices, and our young people are far from being exempt. Blasphemy and religious indifference; neglect of prayer, Mass, and the sacraments; drunkenness and impurity; such are the plague-spots on the spiritual corpses of many of our young people.

Yet, alas! as parents raise their eyes to our Lord's gracious countenance and beg his pity, they should sometimes confess that they are not without blame for their misfortunes. Many parents spoil their children by bad example. For if they profane the name of God in the midst of their families, they need not be surprised to find that in after-years their children have no reverence for God or for his church or his sacraments. Fathers who come home smelling strong of drink, and now and then plainly intoxicated, may indeed hope to save their own souls by thorough repentance, but are likely enough to have drunkards among their children. Parents who tolerate improper language in the household, and can laugh at a double-meaning joke, and see no harm in a lascivious dance or a doubtful novel, need not be surprised to find that their daughters have lost maidenly reserve, and that their sons are given to open debauchery. Parents who neglect their Easter duty, and who easily excuse themselves from Sunday Mass, need not be surprised if their children fall quite away from the practice of religion and even from its belief.

Now, it often happens that children who have been treated too leniently while quite young are treated too severely when a little older. Too much authority should not be used with boys and girls who are some years in their teens. With them authority is at best

a medicine, and not a food. To strengthen a boy's virtue, to make him love religion, to give him a bright notion of the next world and of the value of his soul, the exercise of authority is one means, but perhaps the least useful of all. In some cases authority can only do harm. To make a person who has full use of reason a good Christian it is necessary to put him in the way of intelligent instruction, by giving him good, readable religious matter, books or papers; by persuading him by such inducements as an occasional little present, and by a continual interest in his progress, to keep his place at Sunday-school; by introducing and discussing religious topics in family conversation, and by interesting him to attend sermons and lectures. Meantime let there be many kind words and much sympathetic conduct, forgetfulness of past offences, patience with natural difficulties and with youthful folly; let all this go beforehand and authority will find nothing left to do.

Brethren, do not suppose that it is always best to *force* one to do what he ought to do; try rather to induce him, to attract him. St. Francis de Sales says: "You can catch more flies with one drop of honey that with a barrel of vinegar"; and he also says: "For every ounce of good advice add a pound of good example."

Therefore it is that so many scolding parents end by becoming weeping parents. Parental authority, which should be merely the supremacy of all that is worthy of affection, has made home hateful and driven the children into occasions of sin—the saloon and the low theatre for the boys, the stolen interview and the common dance for the girls.

But, some one might say, what if your child has

got beyond you and will be bad in spite of every best endeavor on your part—what then? Well, at any rate there is no sense in railing at him. If you cannot make him better, what is the sense of making him miserable? And is not then the very time to lay him, spiritually speaking, in his coffin, and lead our Lord up to him, and, kneeling down, say: O Lord! have pity on me, for this is my dear son, dead in mortal sin? Say but the word; touch his dead soul with thy loving hand; stir him up to repentance!

Many such prayers cannot be said without producing their effect: the resurrection of your child's soul from the death of mortal sin.

SERMON CXXV.

THE LAW OF CHARITY.

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ.—EPISTLE OF THE DAY.

THE law of Christ, dear brethren, is essentially a law of charity. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole soul and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." This is the whole law of Christ summed up, and it is plain that this is a law of love. But the Apostle bids us bear one another's burdens that we may fulfil this law, which, as is evident from the text just quoted, imposes upon us the love of our God and of our neighbor. How, then, will the bearing of others' burdens help us to serve God better?

That we have burdens, and some of us rather

heavy ones, is clear enough ; and that most of us are only too willing to have some one help us to carry them will be, I think, generally agreed to. Every one has his own difficulties : every one has something which he would like to get rid of if he could, because it interferes with his comfort. Now, I do not think the Apostle wished us to suppose from his words that God would have us free each other from *all* suffering, since that is not possible, as we know that hardship forms a necessary part of our probation. We must expect to have something to suffer always.

But what he would have us do, it seems to me, is to help each other by counsel and material aid, to make what otherwise might be almost unbearable easier to carry. "My yoke is sweet and my burden light." This is the spirit he wishes us to strive after. It is an unselfish spirit he desires for us, such as will make us forget our own sufferings in ministering to the wants of others. He wants us to cultivate charity ; to look beyond ourselves and our own interests, and take up the troubles of our brethren.

But you say to me : "I do not see what advantage there is in all this ; if I take another's burden, I am but adding to my own." It is just here that our really helping each other appears. It is by this very assistance we give our neighbor that we fulfil the law of Christ, which demands suffering of us. For by our sympathizing with others and sharing in their difficulties our own burdens become lighter. If we simply took care of ourselves and were forgetful of all the rest of the world, we would chafe beneath our load ; we would be so wrapped up in ourselves that nothing could persuade us that our sufferings were the very best things that could befall us.

By helping our neighbor we help ourselves. We are led to be reconciled to our lot, to expect nothing more from God for ourselves than what we see others getting. We know that they have as just a claim upon him as we, yet they have their troubles as well as we. The road to heaven is open to all, but all must take what they get as they go along, and be thankful for it and make no comparisons. All get a goodly share of what is disagreeable to nature on the way; our own portion differs only in kind and quantity from that of others.

By helping our neighbor, too, we fulfil, as the Apostle tells us, the law of Christ, for the law of Christ is charity—love towards God, love towards our fellow man. Our stooping to our neighbor's need fosters God's love in our souls no less than love of our neighbor. It makes us go to God as our Father and recognize his justice. We perceive the necessity of mortifying our rebellious appetites and placing ourselves entirely in God's hands. How much happier, how much better Christians we would be did we but bear each other's burdens! Then we would soon learn what now seems so hard: that the yoke of Christ is indeed sweet and his burden truly light.

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Epistle. *Eph. iii.* 13-21. Brethren: I beseech you not to be disheartened at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power by his Spirit unto the inward man. That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts: that being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth. To know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God. Now to him who is able to do all things more abundantly than we ask or understand, according to the power which worketh in us: to him be glory in the church, and in Christ Jesus, throughout all generations, world without end. Amen.

Gospel. *St. Luke xiv.* 1-11. At that time: When Jesus went into the house of a certain prince of the Pharisees, on the Sabbath day, to eat bread, and they were watching him. And behold, there was a certain man before him that had the dropsy. And Jesus answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? But they held their peace. But he, taking him, healed him, and sent him away. And answering them, he said: Which of you whose ass or his ox shall fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath day? And they could not answer him to these things. And he spoke

a parable also to them that were invited, marking how they chose the first seats at the table, saying to them: When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the highest place, lest perhaps one more honorable than thou be invited by him: and he who invited thee and him, come and say to thee: Give place to this man; and then thou begin with blushing to take the lowest place. But when thou art invited, go, sit down in the lowest place: that when he who invited thee cometh, he may say to thee: Friend, go up higher. Then shalt thou have glory before them that sit at table with thee. Because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

SERMON CXXVI.

CHRISTIAN HUMILITY.

He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—GOSPEL OF THE DAY.

As we hear these familiar words, my brethren, some of us will perhaps be inclined to say, or at least to think, that this matter of humility is just a little threadbare, so to speak; that we have already heard pretty much all that can be said about it. I dare say this is true; but when a thing is very important it has to be spoken of quite often. And humility is very important; after the love of God and of our neighbor, there is nothing more so. In fact, the difficulties in the way of loving God and our neighbor as we should, come, we may say, entirely from our inordinate love of ourselves; and this inordinate love of ourselves generally takes the shape either of

pride or sensuality. In other words, pride and sensuality are the two great causes of all our sins; what wonder, then, that our Lord should warn us so frequently about them?

And the very fact that we think we have heard enough about humility shows that we are not so humble as we ought to be. If we think that we are well up in this matter, it is a good sign that we are not. Many people will say, especially when they are on their knees, "Oh! I am a miserable sinner; I am everything that is bad"; but when they get up from their knees, and look around them, you will find that they think themselves in point of fact pretty nearly as good as anybody else, and perhaps, on the whole, rather better than most people whom they know.

It is not, however, after all, about the matter of goodness that pride is most sensitive. Most Christians, unfortunately, do not try very hard to be saints, and are not very much tempted to be proud of their achievements in that direction. But almost every one considers himself tolerably well gifted in the matter of natural common sense; he thinks his brains about as good as any one else's, though he may readily admit that he has not had so great advantages as another, or, in other words, that he is "no scholar." So, to be thought or called a natural-born fool is a very hard trial for any one's humility; almost all of us, I am afraid, would rather be called a rascal. To be considered bad-looking, that again is a great mortification to some people; or to have one's birth and family despised, to be thought low and vulgar, how many can you find that will put up with that? That is the real reason why you so often

hear some one find fault with somebody else for being "stuck up"; it is that when he or she is stuck up I am stuck down.

You notice, my brethren, that this matter of pride is mostly comparative, as I may say. We should not mind other people being stuck up, if we could only be stuck up too. And it is just here on this tender point that the parable of our Lord in to-day's Gospel touches. He says: "When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place, lest, perhaps, one more honorable than thou be invited." This is where the shoe pinches, this admitting that some one else is more honorable than we are; especially in this country, where every one shakes hands with the President, and all are made, as far as possible, equal. Still, we can manage to admit that there are some who are better entitled to the first place than ourselves; indeed, we cannot well help that. But our Lord would have us go farther than this. He says: "Sit down in the lowest place."

That is the great lesson of humility that is so hard for us to learn. Not to say, "I am a miserable sinner; I am blind, weak, and fallible." Oh! yes, we can say that easily, because we feel that everybody else ought to say it of himself, and probably will say it. But to be ready to acknowledge, especially if the general opinion goes that way, that we are inferior to anybody else, whoever it may be that we may be compared with; to take this for granted, and not be surprised if others agree with us, this is that true humility which is exalted, not by being put in a place where it can be able to crow over others and thus be turned into pride, but by being granted the exaltation of being brought nearer to God.

SERMON CXXVII.

VANITY.

When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the highest place.—St. Luke xiv. 8.

It is not many Sundays ago that our Lord's words taught us humility by the spectacle of the Pharisee's pride contrasted with the publican's lowliness. Yet holy church repeats the same lesson to-day by telling us what our Lord thinks of one who is vain enough to take too high a place at the wedding-feast. And indeed, brethren, it takes much teaching for us to learn the corruption of our own hearts. If there is anybody we lack close acquaintance with, it is our own very selves. If there is one book harder for us to read than any other it is the book of our own hearts. Yet in spite of this ignorance of ourselves, either before God or in comparison with our neighbor, we are always tempted to set ourselves up for something far better than we really are, and no less tempted to depreciate our neighbor.

We are too anxious to exercise the same certain judgment about relative merit in spiritual things as we fancy we can do in temporal affairs. You doubtless know the various standards of worldly preference. One person looks around at others and exclaims in his or her secret heart: With what shocking bad taste do such and such ones dress! They must be very vulgar indeed; surely I cannot be expected to demean myself by going in *their* company. Another says: There is a great deal in social standing. Let every one know his place in the world and keep it; as for me, I am certainly quite above the com-

pany of such and such persons. Another says: Brains is the standard: good clothes and social position—what are they but miserable vanity and prejudice? But I have brains; and I know it, and can show it; therefore, stand aside for me, for I am entitled to preference.

Now, brethren, what is there in the spiritual life that answers to good clothes? I will tell you: it is certain external practices of devotion. External devotions are indeed necessary for the soul just as clothes are for the body, and if used in the right spirit give one spiritual warmth and adorn the soul with interior virtues. But we must not be vain of them. And what answers in the spiritual life to the consciousness of social position? The remembrance of many years spent in God's service and the various spiritual gifts received from him. But beware of spiritual pride. And what answers to human talents and ability? Facility in prayer, glibness of speech about spiritual things, knowledge of devotional books, and the like. And these may be made a cause of vanity.

So when our Lord looks in among the guests at his spiritual table we may well imagine his saying to one or other of us: Friend, I perceive that you have been trusting a trifle too much to certain external practices; they are very good in themselves, but should be joined to a deeper and truer contrition for your sins and a more practical use of penance and mortification. I am sorry to make you blush, but really you must step down a few seats lower. To another he says: Friend, you are in the wrong place; I know that you have received many graces from me in the past, but I also notice a great want of grati-

tude on your part; besides this, I see from your present disposition of mind that, if you are left where you are, you are likely to be quite puffed up with vanity. So I will set you down a little lower to a place opposite a good dish of thanksgiving and another of humility. To another he says: What are you doing there, you who are so fault-finding and overbearing? Do you trust to your knowledge of spiritual things and your pious talk? Your religion consists of words, words, words, and what I want is deeds. So, down with you to the last place at the table; and if I had any place lower than the last you should certainly have it.

Brethren, let us be glad to sit down anywhere at our Lord's banquet; glad of so much as the crumbs from the table. That is to say, the friendship of God is too precious a thing, and too much all his own to give, that we should presume to glory in it. Humility, detachment from our own excellence, willingness to think poorly of our own merits—such are the virtues that underlie all true piety.

SERMON CXXVIII.

BEHAVIOR IN CHURCH.

And he spoke a parable also to them that were invited, marking how they chose the first seats at the table.—Gospel of the Day.

Our Blessed Saviour in this day's Gospel teaches us a lesson of good order and practical conduct which may be applied in many ways. I will make the application of it this morning to our conduct in church.

We will consider the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass the great feast to which we are invited, the church the banquet-hall, and the pews the places set apart for the guests.

There is nothing more conducive to the pleasure and purpose of an assemblage than the good order and proper arrangement of everything connected with it, and we often hear persons speak of some event in which they participated as being most enjoyable because everything was so well ordered and arranged. Now, all this applies with double force to the public services of religion. Catholics greatly enjoy the public services of the church when everything is well ordered and arranged, and there is nothing to distract them or jar upon them. For at every service there is the divine presence, and where perfect order reigns it soon makes itself felt: its calm peace steals in upon the soul, it communes sweetly, and worships "in spirit and in truth."

But in order to secure an external condition of things in our churches so essential to recollection and prayer, each one must know his place and occupy it without delay or confusion, and in our present system of church arrangement each worshipper is supposed to have his or her special place assigned, and the regular seat in the church has become a requirement of devotion as well as a necessity of church finance.

Hence, to secure a permanent place in the church is a duty of devotion as well as something of an obligation; and we find that truly pious Catholics almost invariably try to secure seats in their parish churches, be they ever so humble. Indeed, Catholics who fail to do this are not apt to be very steady in the prac-

tice of their religion; and there can be no doubt as to the neglect of duty in the case. To contribute to the support of religion is as much a positive law of the church as to attend Mass on Sundays, and the ordinary revenue for the support of religion comes from the pew-rents. We insist, therefore, that every Catholic who can possibly afford it should have his seat in church; good order requires this as well as duty and devotion. It is a poor business to be all the while occupying other people's pews, and sometimes, perhaps, be required to vacate them. Pew-holders have their rights, and they must be protected in them. Nevertheless, to secure good order and harmony at the services of the church, pew-holders must be willing at times to waive their rights and allow strangers and others to occupy the vacant seats in their pews. This is no more than politeness and common Christian charity demand. To refuse a vacant seat in church to a stranger is selfishness gone to seed, and they are few, I hope, who would be guilty of such vulgarity.

But while all who possibly can should have their regular places in church, there will, no doubt, always be a very considerable number who, through poverty or perverseness, will be pew-holders at large, and to them I would also address a few remarks. The Catholic Church is the church of the poor! This is our glory and our pride. No one can be too poor to attend the services of the Catholic Church. God is no respecter of persons, nor is his church. The poor are always welcome in her grandest temples, and none should ever miss a single service of religion because they are too poor to hire a regular seat. In this church, thank God, everything is free to them,

and there are always vacant seats for them to occupy. We not only wish non-pew-holders to occupy the vacant seats in our church, but we insist on their occupying them, for the good order and harmony of the services require that, as far as possible, all should be seated. The only condition we impose is the Gospel injunction: "Do not sit down in the first place" or in the place of another; and if you are told to move up higher, do not refuse. Crowding around the doors is more objectionable than anything else, for there is nothing else that interferes so much with the good order and arrangement of the services.

Let me repeat, then, in conclusion, the words of the parable: "Friend, go up higher," and don't crowd around the doors.

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. *Eph. iv.* 1–6. Brethren: As a prisoner in the Lord, I beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called, with all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity, careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one Spirit: as you are called in one hope of your vocation. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all, who is blessed for ever and ever.

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. xxii.* 35–46. At that time: the Pharisees came nigh to Jesus: and one of them, a doctor of the law, asked him, tempting him: Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said to him: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets. And the Pharisees being gathered together, Jesus asked them saying: What think you of Christ? Whose son is he? They say to him: David's. He saith to them: How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying: "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool"? If David then called him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word: neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

SERMON CXXIX.

PRAYER FOR SINNERS.

And the other is like unto this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.—St. Matt. xxii. 39.

How great must be the dignity of human nature, my brethren, since, as we learn by this day's Gospel, our Lord couples the love of his fellow-men with the love of his own sovereign and divine self! Perhaps if we appreciated the native worth of human nature we should be a trifle more patient with its faults. I mean, of course, other people's faults, for with our own faults we are all too patient.

The practical lesson conveyed by the commandment, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," is that it is our duty to love sinners and to pray for them. To love good people is easy enough, and we think a man a kind of a monster who has not at least one or two dear friends whose virtues have won his love. But it takes a good Christian to love what at first sight seems so hateful—a drunkard, a libertine, an apostate, a bully, a thief. To have an actual, practical affection for such persons, even when one is related to them, seems quite a special thing—a peculiar vocation, a side path in the spiritual life, and not by any means the common business and regular vocation of every-day Christians. Yet a moment's thought shows that it is, without any doubt, our Lord's blessed will that we should have a special affection for just such hardened sinners. Are they not men, and are they not purchased by the Blood of Christ?

How much we mistake our duty in reference to such poor wretches! When you say of one, "Oh! he

is a most worthless creature," how surprised you would be if you could hear a whisper coming from his guardian angel: "Jesus Christ thought him worth dying for." And when you say of another, "Oh! I can't bear him; I can't stay a moment in his company," how surprised you would be to hear, "And I, an angel of God, I gladly keep him company day and night." Surely, brethren, there is something worth loving, heartily loving, in a soul that our Lord would die for, and to whom God would give a bright angel as a constant companion. We are like men going through a picture-gallery: we admire only the brilliant and unmistakable beauties displayed there—here a gorgeous sunset, there a fine battle-scene, and again a ship tossing upon the waves. But one of better taste than common, without forgetting all these, will be able to detect the work of a great master, though faded with the lapse of many years and covered all over with dust. So it is with the poor sinner's soul: it is the work of a great master. And what though it be all stained and spotted with mortal sin; is there no such thing as true repentance? Are there no fountains of living waters in the sacraments in which it may be washed whiter than snow? Are there no gems of divine grace with which it may be decked out as a bride waiting for the bridegroom?

Prayer for the conversion of sinners should be far more practised than it is. Why, brethren, look around you in this great city, and if you can count the stars of heaven or the sands of the sea-shore you can count the men and women in mortal sin; and, alas! very many of them belong to our religion. Nay, look about in your own families. How seldom will a family be found where there is not at least one mem-

ber living openly at enmity with God! Now, just here, in the midst of the worst wickedness, are many thousands of devout servants of God, and in every family one or two souls whose very names might be Faithful and True. And God arranges this mingling of good and evil, that the good souls by their prayers may save the bad ones from eternal death; just as in southern countries men plant eucalyptus-trees in low, marshy places, for the eucalyptus, with its fragrant leaves, counteracts the poisonous vapors of the swamp.

If, therefore, you pray for yourself you do well; but do not forget that, if you are a true Christian, the poor sinner is your other self. And if you pray for the souls in purgatory, do not forget that there are many souls about you who are always in danger of hell, and unless many prayers are offered for them they are likely enough to be lost for ever.

SERMON CXXX.

THE CHRISTIAN VOCATION.

I beseech you to walk worthy of your vocation in which you are called.—EPISTLE OF THE DAY.

IN the Gospel our Lord says that the perfect love of God and of our neighbor fulfils all the law and the commands of God through the prophets. At another time he said: "Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect." It is plain that every Christian has a vocation—that is, is called to a Christ like, a God-like life. Something more is expected of him because he has received infused light to know by divine

grace how to do more. In general, we call that a higher, a more exalted spiritual state. Now, there are degrees even in this depending upon the particular grace it pleases God to give to one person or another.

One star differeth from another star in brightness and glory, and so shall the glory of the Christians differ in heaven, according to the perfection to which they have brought their souls while in this school-time of the world-life. Over and above what are called strict Christian laws, which one must obey or lose heaven, there are certain principles of Christianity called Evangelical counsels—namely, poverty, chastity, and obedience. Some folks fancy these counsels apply only to monks, nuns, and priests. That is a great mistake. Monks, nuns, and priests receive grace and are bound by *their* vocation to practise these counsels in a high degree, and yet not even all these in the same manner. A secular priest, for instance, is not called to practise poverty in the same manner as a priest of a religious order, although he or even a layman living in the world may practise that counsel, as he may the other counsels, too, just as perfectly as any monk ever heard of. All depends on the grace one has. His vocation and his responsibility and his position in heaven all hang on his fidelity to grace.

All Christians should practise the counsel of poverty. Yes, both rich and poor. The spirit of poverty is detachment from created things. One's heart must not be set on them. One must not love riches for their own sake. One must feel obliged to share with the poor. One must not despise the poor, but love them for Christ's sake. One must give a good

deal for religious purposes. One must keep his baptismal vows to renounce the devil and all his pomps. One must, therefore, deny himself in many things that savor of the pride of riches, even if he is rich. Why? Not because he is a monk, nun, or priest, but because he is a Christian.

Every Christian must practise the counsel of chastity. Heaven help us! In these degraded times, to judge by the fashionable indecencies sanctioned by so-called society people—the horrible abuses of the holy state of marriage, the filthy accounts appearing every day in the newspapers—one would think that even the Sixth Commandment was abolished. Now I need not enter into particulars, but you know, without further argument or illustration, that every Christian man, woman, and child would be unworthy the name if they did not, almost every day, make many sacrifices and struggles against temptation—all of which mean practising the counsel of the Christian perfection of chastity.

So also of obedience. One must obey the Ten Commandments and the laws of the church. Oh! yes. And have we not also to obey the special decrees of the Holy Father, of our bishop, and of our pastor? What sort of a Christian is he who is his own shepherd, or one who is always "standing up for his own rights," as they say, submitting just within law and only when he cannot help himself? And does *Christian humility* mean nothing in act? That is a narrow road of obedience and a long one, as you all know; and blessed is he who joyfully walks therein. Instead of wanting to shirk these counsels, and put all upon the shoulders of religious, every one ought to be praying hard that God will, of

his divine bounty, give us, too, men and women living in the world, more and more grace to practise all that our worldly condition will allow us to do, convinced by faith that he is most truly happy here, as he will certainly be hereafter, who is filled with high Christian aspirations, striving to "walk worthy of his vocation" and realize in himself the picture of a perfect Christ-like life.

SERMON CXXXI.

ERRONEOUS VIEWS OF VOCATION.

As a prisoner in the Lord, I beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called.—Eph. iv. 1.

Brethren, has it ever occurred to you that each one of us has a vocation in this life? I refer not to our Christian vocation, which we all have in common, but to the particular state of life to which each one of us has been called. It is not an uncommon error for people to think that priests and nuns are the only privileged mortals who are called by God to some special work, and that to their vocation alone God has attached peculiar and extraordinary graces.

This is an error we must correct. We have all, thank God, the vocation to be Christians and the call to be saints, but we have, moreover, our own special calling, suitable to our character and disposition; and our common Christian vocation, and in a great measure our eternal salvation, depends on our fulfilling worthily the particular vocation in which we are called.

Some of us God has called to be priests, to serve continually at his altar. Some to be fathers of families, and others to remain single all their life. Some he has called to the higher professions, and others to the hard but manly toil of every-day life. But to all these vocations, to all these different states of life, he has attached certain duties, peculiar obligations, which must be met and fulfilled.

The great danger, brethren, that we have to avoid is the common and stupid error of those who hold that their every-day vocation has nothing to do with this Sunday calling; that there is little, if any, connection between their own special calling and their general calling to be Christians; who maintain that as business men they can and must act in their own business-like way, banishing God from their hearts and his law from their lives, at least during their hours of business.

This error, stupid as it is, is not so uncommon as one might at first imagine. Take a few practical cases. How many are there who, when they examine their conscience, ever think of questioning themselves upon the duties of their position in life? How many fathers of families, listening to these words to-day, question themselves daily as to how they govern those whom God has put under their charge; how they watch and provide for the spiritual and temporal welfare of those whom they are called upon to support? How many young men ever think of asking themselves how they have fulfilled the obligations they are under to parents, now perhaps unable to take care of themselves? How many business-men question themselves as to the honesty or propriety of this or that mode of action they have been following?

Alas! they are few indeed. And this is the practical outcome of not recognizing the close connection there is between our every-day calling and our Christian vocation. As every vocation, brethren, has its duties and its difficulties, so every calling has its special helps and graces. God saw each one of us from all eternity —just as we are to-day, with all the weaknesses of our character, with all the difficulties that surround us, and all the temptations with which we have to contend. He foresaw all these things and provided for them, regulating his helps and graces according to our wants, and directing all things towards our final destiny. His grace is always sufficient for us, and as long as we remain in his friendship there is no vocation or calling so difficult or trying but what can be cheerfully and manfully borne and worked towards our soul's salvation. The lot of some is certainly not an easy one, but God always fits the back for the burden.

The practical question I would have you ask yourselves to-day, brethren, is this: Granted that I have a vocation in this life; granted that Providence has placed me in a position that involves duties and obligations to God, my neighbor, or myself; how am I fulfilling these obligations? How am I walking in the vocation in which I am called? Worthily or unworthily—that is the all-important question for me to answer to-day to the satisfaction of my conscience, as I will have to answer it one day to Almighty God.

Am I the father or mother of a family? If so, do I discharge the duties of my calling? Do I make my home pleasant and agreeable for my children? Do I supply them with suitable home amusements? Do I furnish them proper reading matter, or do I allow

them to waste their time and ruin their souls with the vile penny literature of the day? Do I oblige them to come to Mass and approach the sacraments, while I neglect these duties myself? Or am I a business-man who deals squarely and honestly with my neighbors, never on the alert to take advantage of the ignorant and weak? Am I in the employment of others, and, if so, do I fulfil my calling worthily by doing all that strict justice or Christian charity requires of me? Or am I just to men who work for me? These are some of the questions regarding your vocations that I would have you ask yourselves to-day.

Brethren, when we come to render our account to God, be sure of this: he will not trouble us with the question as to whether we have been experts in our respective professions, whether we have been successful business-men or skilled mechanics; no, but whether we have been just and honorable, whether we have walked *worthily* in the vocations to which we have been called. Walk then, brethren, worthy of your vocation, worthy of the church which has reared you, worthy of the hope that is in you, worthy of the name you bear, that of Christ, who has redeemed you. Imitate him, live as he lived, and suffer in your calling the things he suffered. Then the prayer of our patron St. Paul will not be in vain, and we will walk worthy of the vocation in which we are called.

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. 1 *Cor. i.* 4–8. Brethren: I give thanks to my God always for you, for the grace of God that is given you in Christ Jesus, that in all things you are made rich in him, in every word, and in all knowledge: as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace, waiting for the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who also will confirm you unto the end without crime, in the day of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. ix.* 1–8. At that time: Jesus entering into a boat, passed over the water and came into his own city. And behold they brought to him a man sick of the palsy lying on a bed. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Son, be of good heart, thy sins are forgiven thee. And behold some of the Scribes said within themselves: This man blasphemeth. And Jesus seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the man sick of the palsy), Rise up: take thy bed and go into thy house. And he rose up, and went into his house. And the multitude seeing it, feared, and glorified God who had given such power to men.

SERMON CXXXII.

PRESUMPTION OF GOD'S MERCY.

Unless you have believed in vain.—1 Cor. xv. 2.

Dear Brethren: The Apostle appears to be of a different mind from some of us, who seem to think that there is no such thing as believing in vain. Do not sinners rest quite secure in their wickedness just because they believe in the true religion? Do they not feel sure of salvation because they know how to be saved? Is not the blessed privilege of the holy faith the secret reason of many a person's delay of repentance? It is against all such that St. Paul stands when he speaks of a vain faith; and our Blessed Lord himself when he says that pagan Tyre and Sidon shall rise up in witness against those who had the true religion and used it only to puff themselves up with spiritual pride.

To be guilty of an unused faith is the high-road to eternal loss among Catholics. Some poor souls will be lost because, though born in error, they have refused to follow the light of reason into the church. But we shall be lost, if at all, because we have believed in vain. Some outside of the church shall be lost because they have sinned even against the simplest precepts of nature's law. But we shall be condemned for believing all that our Lord revealed and making it vain by our wicked deeds. A vain faith is like the background of a picture: the eye catches and dwells on the objects in the foreground, but these could not be seen clearly but for the tints in the background against which they are drawn. So what we do will one day be contrasted with what we know;

the strong light of faith will only cause the black, filthy sins of our life to be more fully revealed to the Judge.

Have you never seen a blind man whose eyes seemed perfectly good, clear, and bright, and yet utterly blind? There is such a kind of blindness; some men really have eyes and see not, because the nerve is dead, and the nerve is like the soul of the eye. So with our faith: God gave it to us to see by and walk by and live by; to know his law and live up to it; to know our sins and to confess them with true sorrow—in a word, to practise what we know that we ought to practise. But some become like the idols of the nations you read of in one of the Vesper psalms: "They have eyes, and see not; they have ears, and hear not." Wicked Catholics perceive the right way; they hear of the dangers of the wrong way, and go right along with this knowledge, and neglect prayer and Mass, blaspheme and fight, get drunk and debauch, and steal, yet having all the time full assurance that somehow or other their faith will save them. Brethren, their faith is vain; their hope of eternal life is not reasonable or well founded; the beauty of the truth they possess is like the cold beauty of a corpse, which makes one shudder only the more from its incongruity with the putrid decay so surely approaching.

Yet how rich a treasure is the true faith! What a comfort to know the truths of religion! What a privilege to know our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and to be in communion with him, his Blessed Mother, his glorious saints, his holy church! What a perversity, then, to use all this as a burglar uses his rope-ladder: a means of making a criminal life

more secure. But it cannot be. It is a delusion. There is no means of making a criminal life secure, except by turning quickly away from it, detesting it, confessing it, and, by the light of faith and the strength of charity, leading a good life.

SERMON CXXXIII.

DRUNKENNESS.

Take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life.—LUKE xxi. 34.

THESE words of our Lord recorded by St. Luke contain a very direct admonition against intemperance and its associate vices. Gluttony and drunkenness are closely allied, inasmuch as the former is generally associated with excessive eating, and the latter is used to denote excess in intoxicating drink. Not only from a religious standpoint, but from medical science, St. Luke knew and could teach the injurious effects on the human system produced by the unrestrained gratification of the appetites. His knowledge in these matters was evidently recognized by those associated with him in preaching the Gospel, for St. Paul speaks of him as "the beloved physician" (Colossians iv. 14).

There are many passages of Holy Scripture that show forth the dangers of drunkenness. In the Old Testament we read that Noe and Lot were both taught by sad experience the shame and degradation arising from the loss of self-control through the excessive use of intoxicating drinks. No sanction can

be found in the Bible for the opinion that intemperance is a pardonable weakness. It is a very long time ago, indeed, since this vice of drunkenness was first condemned by the authorized teachers of religion. Among the vices it is properly classified with gluttony, which is one of the seven deadly sins.

The Apostles sent forth by our Lord to teach all nations strenuously inculcated the duty of *sobriety* and *watchfulness* on each individual Christian. St. Peter and St. Paul especially insist on this personal vigilance as being of the utmost importance. "*Being sober*, hope perfectly for that grace which is offered you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. *Be sober and watch*, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he may devour" (First Epistle of St. Peter v. 8–13).

St. Paul teaches the same lesson of *personal vigilance* in these words: "Let us *watch and be sober*, having on the breastplate of faith and charity, and for a helmet the hope of salvation" (1 Thess. v. 6–8). "For the grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men, instructing us that renouncing impiety and worldly desires, we should *live soberly*, and justly, and piously in this world" (Titus ii. 3).

A great doctor of the church, St. Augustine, in the fourth century declared that there were at that time drunkards, plenty of them, and that people had grown accustomed to speak of drunkenness, not only without horror, but even with levity. This condition of things was brought about by the vicious teaching of the pagans, who sanctioned every form of sensual gratification. In one of his sermons St. Augustine uses these words: "The heart of the drunkard has lost all feeling. When a member has

no feeling it may be considered dead and cut off from the body. Yet we sometimes are lenient, and can only employ words. We are loath to excommunicate and cast out of the church ; for we fear lest he who is chastised should be made worse by the chastisement. And though such are already dead in soul, yet, since our Physician is Almighty, we must not despair of them."

Again in a letter to a bishop, written in the year 393, St. Augustine refers to the intemperance then prevalent in the city of Carthage. "The pestilence," he says, "is of such a magnitude that it seems to me it cannot be cured except by the authority of a council. Or, at least, if one church must begin, it should be that of Carthage. It would seem like audacity to try to change what Carthage retains." Then he proceeds to urge that the movement against intemperance be conducted in the spirit of meekness, saying: "I think that these abuses must be removed, not imperiously, nor harshly ; by instruction rather than by command, by persuasion rather than by threats. It is thus one must act in a multitude: we may be severe towards the sins of a few."

From the words just quoted we see that St. Augustine was justly opposed to the indiscriminate condemnation of a multitude for the sins of a few. And it is very necessary to bear this in mind while dealing with the vice of intemperance, which is so widely prevalent at the present time. The crimes of drunkards are frequently exposed to view in the columns of newspapers, yet the unvarnished truth is seldom stated concerning those who co-operate with them in the nine ways of being accessory to another's sin; and this means especially those who, in cities infected

with intemperance, keep saloons, and those who invite men to drink whom they have reason to fear will abuse it. We know that there are leaders in the ways of vice as well as in the ways of virtue. Special severity is needed with those who deliberately persist in doing wrong with malice aforethought. Men who strive to make laws to defend iniquity, who teach and foster vice for their own personal profit, may properly be called blind leaders of the blind, whose fate has already been predicted by our Lord, the Supreme Judge of the world.

SERMON CXXXIV.

THE DIGNITY AND HAPPINESS OF OBEDIENCE.

Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is pleasing to the Lord.—COLOSSIANS iii. 20.

BRETHREN, there are many new things found out nowadays; but there are also some old ones and good ones being forgotten. Among other things we are apt to forget the happiness of obedience. Of course I do not mean obedience to the church; perhaps there never was an age when Catholics rested so content in the gentle restraint of our holy mother the Church. But I refer to the practice of obedience one to another, done after the pattern of our Lord Jesus Christ. The loveliness of this virtue is best seen in the bosom of the Christian family. Affection, indeed, is the bond of the family, but the fruit of affection is obedience. There is nothing more pleasing to God than the son who is always at the

service of his father and mother. Few families are without at least one such son. He is often the one of whom at first the least was expected ; of poor natural talents, of delicate health, of irascible temper, or one whose earlier years were wayward. But all the time he was observant, though no one, not even himself, gave him credit for it. Year by year the spectacle of father's and mother's affection and sacrifice penetrated him, till he became deeply attached to them. How much this reverent love for his parents had to do with his religious state as a boy and a young man ! It may be true that scarcely any boy ever grows up to be a man and is never a liar to his father and mother, or a pilferer of cake and fruit and pennies about the house. But the good boy drops all this at First Communion or when he goes to learn a trade, and he becomes honest and truthful in little things as well as great. One of the happiest days for him between the cradle and the grave is when he runs and puts the first dollar he has earned into his mother's hands. That good son lets all his brothers go away from home to seek their fortunes ; he stays with the old folks, comforts their old age, closes their eyes in death, and with much love and many tears follows them with his prayers beyond the grave. The others were, perhaps, good children, but he is the hero of the family.

Then there is the good daughter, who in childhood is the sunshine of the family, and in maturer years everybody's other self. How many parents, too poor to hire a servant, have living riches in an industrious daughter ! How often do parents find one at least of the girls who from very infancy is the joy of the whole family ; who seems to have received in

baptism such a fulness of the Holy Spirit that charity, joy, peace, patience, long suffering, kindness, and piety are the common qualities of her character! The faith also finds an apostle in such women. An intelligent woman, though perhaps unable to argue skilfully, can establish the truths of religion by methods all her own. A friendly jest, good-natured silence, a patient return of loving services for ill treatment, the spectacle of her good life, not an hour of which lacks a virtue—all this in one instinct with religion is an unanswerable argument and often irresistible. How did it happen, people sometimes ask concerning this or that person, that she did not marry? She had good enough looks, excellent sense, a bright mind, affectionate disposition, and saw plenty of company. Why did she not marry? My brethren, the day of judgment will tell us that it was because God had set her apart that she might be for her widowed mother or her shiftless, unhappy brothers and sisters the pot of meal that should not waste and the cruse of oil that should not diminish. Brethren, I know of no order of nuns more pleasing in God's sight than the devout women who live a dependent, obscure, hard life in the world, and are old maids for the love of God.

Finally, you may say that such sons and daughters are hard to find. I answer that there are multitudes who approach the standard we have been considering, and more, perhaps, than you fancy who actually attain to it.

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. *Eph. iv.* 23–28. Brethren: Be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind: and put on the new man, who, according to God, is created in justice, and holiness of truth. Wherefore, putting away lying, speak ye the truth every man with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. Be angry, and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your anger: Give not place to the devil. Let him that stole, steal now no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands that which is good, that he may have to give to him who is in need.

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. xxii.* 2–14. At that time: Jesus spoke to the chief priests and Pharisees in parables, saying: The kingdom of heaven is like to a man being a king, who made a marriage for his son. And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage: and they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying: Tell them that were invited: Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come ye to the wedding. But they neglected, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise. And the rest laid hands on his servants, and, having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. But when the king heard of it he was angry, and, sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers and burnt their city. Then he saith to his servants: The wedding indeed is ready; but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find, invite to the wedding. And his servants going out into the highways, gathered together all that they

found, both bad and good: and the wedding was filled with guests. And the king went in to see the guests, and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Having bound his hands and feet, cast him into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.

SERMON CXXXV.

LYING.

Wherefore, putting away lying, speak ye the truth every man with his neighbor.—EPISTLE OF THE DAY.

Of all the vicious habits into which we are prone to fall, there is none more common, and none more miserable, mean, and contemptible, than this one of which the Apostle here speaks. There is also none about which Christians in general have so lax and careless a conscience. True, every one regards lying as in some sense at least sinful; and many would hesitate about going to Holy Communion if they had told a lie after confession. But in spite of that, when the Communion is once made, the tongue which has just received the God of justice and truth will immediately begin again to offend him by telling falsehoods which are too often unjust as well as untrue.

Still, when there is an injustice done by telling a lie; when some one else suffers by it in his character or his goods, there are, I hope, few who do not see what a sin they have committed, and understand that

they must make reparation by taking back what they have said, if they wish to be good Christians. But, for all that, how many injurious lies are told, even by those who think themselves good Christians, and never properly retracted or even thought of afterward by those who tell them! The most abominable slanders pass from mouth to mouth; they are listened to and repeated with the greatest interest and eagerness, without any trouble being taken to ascertain whether what is said is true or not. These people who are so free with their tongues never seem to imagine for a moment that, even when circumstances would justify them—and it is very seldom that they do—in telling a fact bearing against their neighbor they are under an obligation first to find out by careful examination whether it be indeed a fact; otherwise the sin of an injurious lie will rest on their souls.

There are, however, some, and indeed many, who abhor slander, and who are really careful about telling injurious lies, and who hasten to retract what they have said against others, if they find out that, after all, the fact was not as they had good ground to believe. But there are not by any means so many who are careful about the truth for its own sake, and who do not scruple to tell white lies, as they are sometimes called.

What are these white lies? They are of two kinds. The first are those which are told for some end in itself good, to get some advantage for one's self or for another, or to get one's self or some other person out of a scrape; to conceal a fault, to avoid embarrassment, or to save somebody's feelings. These are called officious lies. Then there are others, called jocose, which do no good to any one, but are told

merely for fun; such as the little tricks on others which are often indulged in, or boasts made about things which one has never done. They may be taken back before long, and only meant to deceive for a moment; still they are meant to deceive, if only for a moment, and are, therefore, really lies.

Now officious lies are really forbidden by God's law as well as injurious ones, though of course not so bad as those. And yet how few act as if they really were sins at all! People will say, "I told lies, perhaps three or four every day, but there was no harm in them." No harm! No harm to other people; no, perhaps not, except by bad example and the loss of confidence in your word and that of others; though there is great harm even in that way. But there is a greater harm than this: it is that which the liar does to the sacredness of truth itself, and, as far as he can, to God who is the eternal truth, who loves truth unspeakably, and requires that we should love it for his sake. He will not allow us to tell the most trivial falsehood, though by it we could save the whole world from destruction, or bring all the souls which have been damned out of hell and put them in heaven.

Remember this, then: there are lies which are not injurious, but there are no lies which are not harmful and sinful; no lies for which you will not have to give an account at the judgment of God. Stop, therefore, I beg you at once, this mean, disgraceful, and dishonorable habit of falsehood; it will never be forgiven in confession unless you make a serious and solid purpose against it. Put away lying then at once and for ever, and speak the truth in simplicity; you may sometimes lose by it for the moment, but

you will profit by it in the end, both in this world and in the world to come.

SERMON CXXXVI.

TRUTHFULNESS.

Wherefore, putting away lying, speak ye the truth every man with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.—EPH. iv. 25.

ST. PAUL here teaches us that truthfulness of speech should be a mark of those who profess the true faith. He speaks of the darkness of understanding, the ignorance, the blindness of heart of those who are alienated from the life of God: "but you," he says, "have not so learned Christ. You have been taught the truth as it is in Jesus. You have been taught to put off the old man who is corrupted according to the desires of error, and to put on the new man, who, according to God, is created in justice and holiness of truth: *wherefore*, putting away lying, speak ye the truth every man with his neighbor, for we are members one of another."

Yet, even without these supernatural reasons and motives, the duty of truthfulness is plain to every one by the light of natural reason alone. The gift of speech which so strongly marks the distinction between man and the lower animals enables us to clearly communicate our thoughts to each other. If, then, we make it a means of deceiving others, we plainly offend against the law of nature, which is God's law. In every relation of life we are obliged to depend upon the statements of other men; we

have a right to the truth from them, and it is therefore our duty to tell the truth to others. We can have no feeling of security if we cannot trust the word of those with whom we are brought into daily contact. If lying is common in any class or community, it creates a spirit of distrust and uneasiness instead of that mutual confidence which should prevail.

A high sense of honor in men of the world will often make them strictly truthful. Such men despise a lie as something base and mean and utterly beneath them. If, then, purely human motives, a mere sense of worldly honor, will keep men from lying, how much more should this fault be avoided by those who claim to be trying to serve God, and who are constantly assisted by his grace. Our Lord has told us that liars are the children of the devil, "for he is a liar and the father thereof." But we are called to be the children of God, who is the eternal truth; we have been given the light of the true faith. We glory in the certain truth of our religion; should we not then be zealous for the cause of truth in all things, even in the least. Absolute, unswerving truthfulness in speech should therefore mark the true disciple of Christ.

"But," some may say, "a lie is only a venial sin." Yes, it is true that a lie which is not malicious, which does not, and is not intended to, harm our neighbor in any way, is not a mortal sin; but it is the meanest of venial sins, and we know that a long and terrible purgatory awaits those who are guilty of deliberate venial sin. Moreover, carelessness about the commission of venial sin leads to mortal offences, and there is nothing which will more readily lead a man

into other and graver faults as the habit of deliberate untruthfulness.

Cultivate, then, a love for truth, and seek to acquire the habit of truthfulness even in the smallest matters. Every one despises a deceitful person, and there is nothing a man resents so much as being called a liar. If you do not like being called a liar, do not be one.

SERMON CXXXVII.

WHITE LIES.

Wherefore, putting away lying, speak ye the truth every man with his neighbor.—EPISTLE OF THE DAY.

THERE is perhaps no sin, my brethren, for which people seem to have so little real sorrow, or for which they so seldom make a practical purpose of amendment, as this miserable one of falsehood, of which the Apostle here speaks. You will hear it said: "I told lies, but there was no harm in them; they were to excuse myself, or to save trouble." They are matters to be confessed, oh! yes; the liar will perhaps even run back to say that he is a liar, if he (or quite likely she) has forgotten to mention it at the time. But as for correcting the habit, that is quite another matter. It would seem that the Sacrament of Penance is expected to take effect on these sins by mere confession, without contrition or purpose to avoid them for the future.

But the liar will say: "I am sorry; I have contrition for these lies." Let me ask, however, what kind of sorrow have you? You are sorry that things were

so that you had to tell a lie; but if things were so again to-morrow, would not you tell the lie again? If you are sincere, I am afraid you will say: "Yes, I suppose I should." Where, then, is the purpose of amendment? Without purpose of amendment contrition is nothing but a sham.

Let us, then, my friends, look into our consciences about this matter, and get them straightened out properly. I do not want to be too harsh about it; for after all there are some expressions which people call lies, which are not really so, because the one to whom they are addressed is not expected to be deceived by them, but merely to be prevented from asking further questions. Some people, too, call it a lie when they do not tell the whole truth, but we are not always required—though we often are—to tell the whole truth; and when we are not, there is no lie, as long as what we say is actually true as far as it goes. But it would take too long to go into all the cases concerning what is or is not a lie; and as a general rule one can by a little common sense find them out for himself. Find them out, then; if you cannot surely do so by yourselves, get advice; and when you are certain that you are all right, do not call it a sin to act according to your conscience and reason, and do not make a matter of self-accusation out of it.

But when you cannot see any way to make out that what you say really is not a lie, then do not fall back on the idea that, if it does not injure anybody, there is no harm in it. You are false to yourself in this; for you know there is harm in it, otherwise you would not feel uneasy about it.

And what is the harm? The harm in a lie is

simply that it is a lie, and therefore an offence against God, who is the truth. This is what St. Paul tells us in this very Epistle of to-day. "Put on," he says, "the new man, who, *according to God*, is created in justice and holiness of truth. Wherefore," he continues, "putting away lying, speak ye the truth every man with his neighbor."

Yes, my brethren, God is the truth, and he infinitely loves the truth, in himself and in his creatures. He does not wish us to sacrifice it in the slightest degree, even to save the whole world from destruction. There is harm in a lie, then; harm, if I may say so, to God himself and to his dearest interests. Do not think, then, to save his interests, or any one else's, by lying. Tell the truth and let him look out for the consequences. Tell the truth for God's sake, because he loves it, and hates a lie; tell the truth, and love the truth, for its own sake. We are, as St. Paul says, "created according to God, in holiness of truth"; let us keep the pattern to which we have been made.

Stop, then, deliberate lying for a purpose, which is but too common. But also be careful in what you say; try not even to fall into falsehood thoughtlessly. Let it be your honest pride that your word is as good as your oath.

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. *Eph. v.* 15–21. See, brethren, how you walk circumspectly: not as unwise, but as wise: redeeming the time, for the days are evil. Wherefore become not unwise, but understanding what is the will of God. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury, but be ye filled with the Holy Spirit. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord: giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God and the Father: being subject one to another in the fear of Christ.

GOSPEL. *St. John iv.* 46–53. At that time: There was a certain ruler whose son was sick at Capharnaum. He having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, went to him, and prayed him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Then Jesus said to him: Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not. The ruler saith to him: Sir, come down before that my son die. Jesus saith to him: Go thy way, thy son liveth. The man believed the word which Jesus said to him, and went his way. And as he was going down, his servants met him: and they brought word, saying that his son lived. He asked therefore of them the hour wherein he grew better. And they said to him: Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. The father therefore knew that it was at the same hour that Jesus said to him, Thy son liveth; and himself believed, and his whole house.

SERMON CXXXVIII.

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE.

My dear brethren, we shall, on this occasion, occupy the short time allotted to us with some remarks on a most important subject, namely, that of Christian marriage. We ask for your especial attention to what we have to say on this matter, on account of the great bearing which it has on your happiness both here and hereafter, and hope that you will endeavor to understand thoroughly the teaching of the church regarding it, and that you will resolve not only to obey the laws, but also to follow her suggestions and be governed by her spirit in an affair in which your welfare is so deeply concerned.

The great majority of Christians, as well as of the world in general, are called in the providence of God to the state of marriage; and their calling is as truly a divine vocation as that of others to the religious life and to the priesthood. If, then, the priest or the religious cannot expect to save his soul if he neglects the virtues and the duties proper to his state, neither can those who enter the state of matrimony, if they do not appreciate and endeavor to fulfil the requirements and conditions which God has attached to it; if they rush into it without thought, and remain in it simply from convenience or necessity, without realizing its responsibilities or feeling the burden which it imposes on their consciences.

And yet this is what very many seem to do. Of course we take it for granted that a Catholic, worthy the name, will not marry a person of a different religion. But one should not marry a bad Catholic.

Many appear to be indifferent in this matter to their eternal salvation and act as if conscience and religion had nothing to do with it, but they disregard and fling to the winds even the most common and obvious dictates of prudence as to their comfort and peace in this world. What possible hope of happiness in married life, for instance, can a young woman have who unites her destiny with that of a man who is evidently falling, if, indeed, he has not already fallen, into confirmed habits of intemperance; whose past and present life gives no assurance of advancement or worldly success, but, on the other hand, every indication of the drunkard's failure, ruin, and degradation? What can she be thinking of who, for a mere fancy or caprice, accepts the offer of one to stand as her protector and support whose selfish and beastly appetites are sure to make him soon trample her under his feet, and treat her merely as a drudge to be starved with her children in order that he may gratify his passion for drink, and to be kicked and beaten if she so much as implores him to reform? Or how can she dare to take for her husband one whose sensual passion is certain soon to extinguish every spark of true love he may have felt for her, and who will, before long, be unfaithful to her for the very reason that made him at first seem faithful?

It is painful to speak of these things; but, unfortunately, the frequency of such cases obliges us to do so. Such miseries in marriage cannot be considered, at least in cities like this, as exceptional and extraordinary; no, they must be taken into account, not as mere possibilities, but as actual realities. And, of course, there are others which we have not time to enumerate; the ones of which I have spoken will

serve as examples. It is, then, the part not only of Christian prudence but also of worldly common sense, to make sure, as far as possible, to avoid these dangers. It is far better to remain single than to make a bad marriage; let every one, then, before taking this most important of all steps in life, look carefully where it will lead. Let every one, and certainly every Christian, before selecting a companion for life, whose place no one else can take, satisfy himself or herself that the one who is thus selected has the qualities that are calculated to insure happiness to both parties: that he or she has natural virtues and good habits, well and solidly formed; at least industry, sobriety, and those qualities in general which business men, for example, try to secure in those who are to be charged with matters of far less consequence than the support and care of a family.

SERMON CXXXIX.

MORTIFICATION OF OUR LOWER NATURE.

Now if we be dead with Christ we believe that we shall live also together with Christ.—From the Epistle of the Sunday.

The meaning of the Apostle, my brethren, is expressed in one great Catholic word—mortification. The lower nature that is in us must be put to death that the higher may live. The animal must die that the man may live. And if literal death be not hereby signified, yet so really destructive of mere appetite is the Christian's union with Christ that mortification or putting to death is one condition of obtaining it. Human ease and pleasure are opposed to

the soul's fulfilment of its destiny. In itself no doubt the natural joy of this life is not evil. But there is no joy of man simply "in itself." It all flows from that root of bitterness which original sin planted in our hearts, and which makes it necessary that we be not simply obedient to God's law, but "born again"; "for," says the Apostle in this same Sunday's Epistle, "we are buried together with Christ by baptism into death, that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life." "Knowing this: that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed." "For he that is dead is justified from sin."

These are very strong words, my brethren. They and the many other such words in Holy Scripture have much to do with explaining our religion—the cross on our churches, the crucifix over our altars, the shamefaced confession, the constant self-denial; even the plaintive tones of the church's voice in her chants, even the touch of sadness in her most joyful offices. Indeed, the true joy of a Christian is in the theological virtue of hope—is placed in a paradise which for him is yet to begin. He is too hardly pressed with the conflict of his higher and lower nature to be quite happy, except in anticipation of a victory never fully gained this side the grave. And it is only when the very taste for ease and pleasure has become blunted that the consolations of the Holy Spirit begin to be felt. The whole inner life of a Christian is regulated by his power to deny himself, and to deny himself, especially in outward things—in eating and drinking, in working and resting, in seeing and hearing.

To noble spirits the very innocent care of the body is irksome; and this from no sin of sloth, but because the soul, absorbed in high spiritual things, is vexed by the mean things of our animal nature. Hence the every-day business of a religious man is to restrain the headlong folly of corrupt nature by the bit and bridle of mortification. And this is every Christian's duty. Though one may feel no call but to the ordinary Christian state, yet is he plainly called to self-denial. Outside the church there is little or nothing of the practical self-restraint of the Gospel. And even among ourselves many are forgetful of this war of the spirit against the flesh, except at the rare intervals of infrequent confession or during such seasons as Lent and Advent. The need of constant self-denial is one of those truths that the ever-flowing waters of forgetfulness wash out of our memories the quickest. Hence it is related of St. Philip Neri that he was accustomed to say in the morning: "Lord, keep thy hand upon Philip today, or, O Lord! Philip will betray thee."

So, my brethren, there is no grace you have more need to pray for than the strength of will to practise some daily mortification. Nay, pray for the grace to accept those that God sends every day and it is enough. Oh! if we could bear patiently for the love of God with his own visitations, with such things as sickness of body and dulness of mind, with poverty and disappointment, with the evil temper of other members of the family, their stupidity and selfishness, we should soon be safe. Brethren, we are all novices, and God is the universal novice-master, and these are his daily mortifications. Others he gives us, too, through the ministry of holy church. Not

a week passes over but we must give one day to God and to our better selves by abstinence from flesh meat. Not a season goes by but the three Ember days are set apart for hunger and thirst. Holy Advent, the penitential season of Lent, make a loud call—would it were better heeded—on our higher nature to reduce the beast to subjection. Meantime, if one wants more self-denial, let him advise with his father confessor, let him consult spiritual writers, let him hearken to the spirit of God within him, always bearing in mind that beyond such mortifications as are of obligation it is not prudent to go, except by advice of a prudent spiritual adviser.

SERMON CXL.

THE VALUE OF TIME.

Redeeming the time.—EPISTLE OF THE DAY.

THERE is a precious treasure, my dear brethren, which is always partly, but only partly, in our possession. Now and then we wake up to the conviction how valuable it is. There is something which must be done, and there is only just time to do it in; we wish there were more, but no, only just so much is allotted to us. Then we realize how priceless time is. The sinner, suddenly struck down by some terrible accident, and with only a few minutes to live—what would he not give for a half-hour more; for time to look into his confused and disturbed conscience; for time to rouse himself to real contrition for his sins; for time, at least, to send for a priest,

and with his help make some sort of preparation for eternity!

But it is not only at the end of our lives, or in moments of such supreme importance, that we would pay for time with gold, or with other things upon which we set great value here. Often we would give much to be able to put ourselves back a day or even an hour in our lives; what an advantage it would give us! We look back on many hours and days in the past; there they were, once at our service, but now squandered and gone for ever.

Time, then, is this precious treasure, which we shall never wholly lose till we pass out of this world for ever. Its golden sands are running rapidly away from us, but still some remain. The uncertainty how much of it is still left should make us put to the best use each instant as it passes. Who would not draw prudently from a chest in which his whole fortune was locked up, if its amount were unknown to him, if the next demand might exhaust it; and who would not put to the best use each penny that he drew?

This is the instruction, the warning that the Apostle gives us in to day's Epistle: "To walk circumspectly; not as unwise, but as wise, redeeming the time." Saving it—that is to say, not letting it slip by us idly and unprofitably; not only having it while it lasts, but receiving also the precious fruits with which it is laden.

How much this caution is needed! How careless we are about this priceless possession which is ours from moment to moment! Some part of it indeed we are generally obliged to employ, and fortunate we are that it is so, in some occupation of profit to our-

selves or to others. Yes, fortunate; for that man must earn his bread by the toil of his body or mind is hardly after the fall a curse, but rather a blessing. Place fallen human nature in the paradise of our first parents, and its final loss could hardly be averted. But the rest: how often do we see, when work is over, that the only thought, even of Christians, is to get rid of this invaluable gift, the precious time which God has given them! They seem to have no thought but to lose themselves and it in some mere sensual pleasure, to fritter it away in gossip or some foolish and needless diversion, or to forget it and throw it away in slothful and unnecessary sleep.

Brethren, some day we shall want all this time that we are now wasting. Then it will stand out before us in its true value; we shall see that it should have been redeemed, and that it is now irredeemable. And what is more, God, who gave it to us, will require an account of it at our hands. He gave it to us for an object; there is not a minute of it that he did not mean us to turn to good use. And we can carry out his purpose if we only will. Let us, then, beware of idleness; even our recreation and rest should be such that we can feel that he would approve of them, and that they will help us in our remaining hours to do the work that he has required and expects us to do. To kill time—let this be a word unheard among us; to kill time is to trample down the seed of eternal life and to invite death to our souls.

Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. *Eph. vi.* 10–17. Brethren: Be strengthened in the Lord, and in the might of his power. Put you on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the snares of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood: but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places. Wherefore take unto you the armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of justice: and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace: in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation; and the sword of the Spirit (which is the word of God).

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. xviii.* 23–35. At that time: Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents. And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. But that servant, falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant being moved with compassion, let him go, and forgave him the debt. But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-

servants that owed him a hundred pence: and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying: Pay what thou owest. And his fellow-servant, falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. Now his fellow-servants, seeing what was done, were very much grieved, and they came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him, and said to him: Thou wicked servant! I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? And his lord being angry, delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all the debt. So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

SERMON CXLI.

FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES.

Shouldst not thou then have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? —St. Matt. xviii. 33.

These words of to-day's Gospel are spoken by our Lord to every one who has been wanting in charity to his neighbor. Each one of us, as a servant of God, as a steward of the gifts, both temporal and spiritual, which he has entrusted to us that we may use them for the furtherance of his honor and glory, is a heavy debtor to the divine justice. But his mercy and love are always ready to temper his justice, if only we show the proper dispositions, if only we bend our rebellious wills to the condition he requires of us, without which it is impossible for us to obtain forgiveness.

This condition is found in the oft-repeated but little thought of petition of the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us." The servant in the parable received forgiveness from his lord for the sum of ten thousand talents (a very large sum of money), yet he was unmerciful to his fellow-servant, who owed him a hundred pence. The difference between these sums is by no means so great as the difference between our offences against Almighty God and those of our brethren against us. If we could only realize who it is that we have offended, and then reflect as well upon our ingratitude in offending him, as upon the innumerable benefits he has showered upon us, we might form some faint idea of the gravity of our sin, and of the immense debt that we owe to his justice. We could not then refuse forgiveness to our neighbor for the trifling, and perhaps merely fancied, injuries that we may have suffered from him. "With what measure you shall mete, it shall be measured to you again." "If you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts," you cannot hope for pardon from God.

How, then, can we best practise this forgiveness which is so necessary for us? In the first place, it must be earnest and sincere forgiveness. It must be "from your hearts," as our Lord says. No mere outward show of forgiveness will be enough, for God sees the heart, and no appearances will satisfy him. But, on the other hand, the forgiveness will not be real and earnest unless it be shown outwardly. Many profess their willingness to forgive who yet show resentment and a spirit of revenge in many little ways, by looks, words, and actions which prove that there

is no real forgiveness in the heart. Then again we find persons who, when they are urged to forgive some wrong, answer: "Well, father, I suppose I must forgive, if you tell me so." It is plain that this is but a very unwilling and faint-hearted forgiveness, which will not answer before God. Why will not the generosity of God towards us lead us to show a like spirit towards our brethren?

We should strive to forgive offences the moment they are committed against us. Our natural impulse when any insult is offered to us is to resent it at once, and pay back in the same coin. How different is this from the example set us by our Lord, "Who, when he was reviled, did not revile; when he suffered, he threatened not." We should check the first uprisings of resentment, and keep back the angry reply, in imitation of our Blessed Lord's silence before his accusers and tormentors. By the practice of this Christian silence many a feud of long continuance would be prevented.

We must also "lay aside all malice," and be ready, when an injury has been done, to be reconciled with our offending brother. This is often very hard for us to do, and very repugnant to our natural inclinations, but it is, nevertheless, absolutely necessary. If we bear malice towards any one, we are not worthy of the name of Christians, or followers of Christ.

Try, then, to put in practice the teaching of this day's Gospel, and forgive from your heart those who have offended you, showing your forgiveness by your words and acts. There is nothing more scandalous and injurious to the Christian name than constant quarrels and long-continued animosities between those who go regularly to the sacraments. Follow, then,

the injunction of St. Paul: "Let all bitterness, and anger, and indignation, and clamor, and blasphemy be taken away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind to one another, merciful, forgiving one another, even as God has forgiven you in Christ."

SERMON CXLII.

GOSSIPING.

Laying hold of him he throttled him, saying: Pay me what thou owest.—WORDS TAKEN FROM TO-DAY'S GOSPEL

THE Gospel of this Sunday, my dear brethren, inculcates in the strongest possible way the distinctively Christian virtue of brotherly love—the duty, that is, of cherishing a spirit of charity and consideration for other men, and especially of forgiving any injuries which they may have done us. This obligation is, however, so clearly and frequently and earnestly enforced in the New Testament, and from our earliest days has been brought home to us in so many ways, that at first sight it might seem that I could do something better this morning than to go back to such an old and familiar subject. And yet, old and familiar as it is, every-day life affords so many proofs that we do not carry our knowledge into practice that I am sure that nine in every ten, perhaps ninety-nine in every hundred, stand in need of being reminded of this old and familiar though badly learned lesson.

For of what is the every-day talk of most women and a great number of men made up, if not of ill-natured criticism and depreciation of their acquaint-

ances, neighbors, and even friends? In the words of St. Paul, are we not continually biting and devouring one another? Are not the newspapers filled with stories which pander to this uncharitable spirit? What, in short, is more common than detraction, and even slander? Yet even these evils, grave and deadly as they are, are but small compared with other manifestations of this same uncharitable spirit. Why, I have been told of people who have worked side by side in the same work-shop, attended the same church, even knelt at the same altar-rail, and yet, for some trifling cause or other, have refused to speak to one another for years! What trouble priests have with people who come to confession to them! Sometimes the very most they can get is a vague, half-hearted expression of forgiveness, but on no account can they in some cases induce their penitents to extend to one another that which is due to every man, be he Jew or Turk, Catholic or Protestant—the ordinary salutations which civility requires.

Now, that all this is wrong is evident. Not one of us is so blind as not to be able to see that. But what the Gospel to-day points out, and what I wish to present to your serious consideration this morning, is the very unpleasant consequences which will infallibly follow upon such conduct. We know the story very well. A slave is in debt to his master for a very large amount—an amount which, while quite willing, he is utterly unable to pay. His master releases him from this debt. Whereupon this fine fellow, meeting a brother-slave who owed him a paltry sum, accosts him in the brutal manner mentioned in the text, demands immediate payment of the money, and, notwithstanding the debtor's entreaties and his willing-

ness to make it good as soon as possible, locks him up in prison until the amount is forthcoming. Thereupon his conduct is brought to the knowledge of their master. He at once summons the wicked slave before him and "delivers him to the torturers until he pays all the debt." Then our Lord says, and I ask for your serious attention to his words: "So also shall my Heavenly Father do to you if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."

Of course, it is unnecessary to point out how strictly this applies to us. Many other texts might be cited from the Gospels to the same effect One only I will mention, and that is, that we cannot say an "Our Father" without making the very forgiveness of our sins, which we ask for, dependent upon our forgiveness of the faults of others. We must forgive if we wish to be forgiven, and this forgiveness must be from the heart; no mere form of words, sufficient to satisfy men, but it must be a forgiveness sincere and genuine, such as to satisfy God, the searcher of hearts, before whom we must appear to give an account of our whole life.

SERMON CXLIII.

MIXED MARRIAGES.

I WISH to give a short instruction on the Sacrament of Matrimony this morning.

If a marriage with a merely nominal Catholic be fraught with dangerous consequences, and be the cause of much disturbance and anxiety to one who wishes

to be a Christian in deed as well as in name—and that it is so I think all will agree—what shall we say of a mixed marriage, as it is called—of the union of a Catholic with one who holds religious views opposed to the faith of the church, or who, perhaps, has no belief or religion at all? How can any true harmony or peace be expected when there is discordance in the matter of religion, which lies nearest to the heart, and is more thoroughly interwoven in all the ideas, opinions, feelings, and practices of a practical Catholic than any other whatever?

Sympathy, union of interests and desires, of plans, hopes, and efforts, must exist in all true friendship; nay, more, without it association or companionship of any kind soon becomes a burden. There is no remedy for this except by dropping or putting in the background those aspirations and affections which are not shared by the other party. And what is true of all friendship is, of course, true above all of that which should be the highest, nearest, and dearest of all friendships—namely, that of marriage. The only way for a Catholic to be at all happy in a mixed marriage is to put religion in the background; to regard it, as, unfortunately, too many do, as a matter of very little importance; as something to be professed, indeed, and occasionally practised, but which is to have no special influence on the general course and tenor of one's life.

How can a Catholic wife, for instance, who is earnest about her religion be really happy with a husband who cannot attach any importance to, or see any sense in, her practices of devotion; to whom holy Mass, Benediction, the sacraments, the veneration of the saints and angels, and many other things

which are her great helps and consolations in life, are mere idle mummeries and superstitions; who looks contemptuously on her observance of Lent, of Fridays, and fast days; who considers all the teachings and laws of the church an imposition and a fraud, to be done away with as far as possible; who, in short, either looks forward to nothing at all beyond this life, or, if he hopes for heaven, has a different one from hers, and seeks for it in a different way? The only plan that can be followed to secure even a seeming peace and agreement is to bring down the Catholic religion to its lowest level, to make out that it is not so very different from Protestantism after all; to be content with Mass on Sundays; to eat meat on Fridays whenever it is more convenient; to let the pope and the church generally get on as best they can, and to say no more about them than can be helped. Yes, this mixture even in the Catholic party of Catholic and Protestant is only too likely to be the result of a mixed marriage.

I know that it may be said, and with truth, that Protestants are not always prejudiced against our religion; that sometimes a Protestant husband is not only willing but anxious that his Catholic wife should attend thoroughly to her religious duties; and we find cases of Protestant wives even becoming Catholics, mainly, as it would seem, to induce by their example a more faithful practice of religion in their Catholic husbands. But these are results which we have no right to expect—no, not even if they are promised beforehand. And too often we find a state of things in a mixed marriage much worse than what I have described. We find, in spite of the most solemn promises made beforehand, a bitter and

shameless persecution ; Mass and the sacraments forbidden ; children denied not only Catholic instruction, but even the grace of baptism ; the priest not allowed in the house even in time of sickness, and nearly all hope gone of receiving the last rites of the church at the hour of death. We do not wish to blame the Protestant party too much in these cases ; he may be acting according to his conscience, but such a conscience, though perhaps good enough for him, is not one which a Catholic should run the risk of being governed by.

Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. *Phil. i.* 6–11. Brethren: We are confident of this very thing, that he, who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus. As it is meet for me to think this for you all: because I have you in my heart; and that in my bonds, and in the defence, and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of my joy. For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your charity may more and more abound in knowledge, and in all understanding: that you may approve the better things, that you may be sincere and without offence unto the day of Christ. Replenished with the fruit of justice through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. xxii.* 15–21. At that time: The Pharisees going away, consulted among themselves how to ensnare Jesus in his speech. And they sent to him their disciples with the Herodians, saying: Master, we know that thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man; for thou dost not regard the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what dost thou think, Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not? But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said: Why do you tempt me, ye hypocrites? Show me the coin of the tribute. And they offered him a penny. And Jesus saith to them: Whose image and inscription is this? They say unto him: Cæsar's. Then he saith to them: Render, therefore, to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.

SERMON CXLIV.

OBEDIENCE TO THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES.

Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.

Our Lord made this reply, my dear brethren, to the question of some who asked him whether it was lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not; or, in other words, whether it was right to pay taxes to support the government of the Roman Empire, to which the Jews were then subjected, and which was a pagan, and in many ways an impious and ungodly power. They hoped that he would say that it was not; for if he did, they would have a very good charge to make against him before the Roman governor, as one who was a rebel and a disobeyer of the laws; and could thus bring about his ruin, which they earnestly desired. Now, if it really had been wrong to pay these taxes Christ would of course have said so; for, as they had said to him in truth, though they meant it as flattery, he was a true speaker, and would not betray the truth to please any man or to escape any danger. But instead of answering in this way, as they hoped, he surprised them by saying that they ought to pay the taxes which were imposed on them; he commanded them to obey the power, hateful in many ways as it was, whose subjects they were.

We must, therefore, conclude that the power of the state, or the law of the land as it is called, has a real claim in the name of God and of Christ to our obedience. For if our Lord required those who heard him to obey the Roman authorities, he would also require us to obey the duly constituted authorities

under which we live at any time. For the cruel and persecuting pagan empire of Rome was surely no more worthy of respect and obedience than any other under which our lot is like to be cast.

And if we could have any doubt as to our duty in conscience on this point, St. Paul confirms this lesson most emphatically. "There is no power," he says, "but from God; and those that are, are ordained of God. . . . And they that resist purchase to themselves damnation. . . . Wherefore be subject of necessity, not only for wrath" (that is, for fear of the consequences) "but also for conscience' sake." And coming to the very matter of which our Lord has spoken, he proceeds: "Render, therefore, to all men their dues. Tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom."

We see then clearly, my brethren, that the laws of the land bind us in conscience. And we do not by any means need to go back to apostolic times to find instruction to this effect. The successors of St. Peter, and those teaching in union with them, have always insisted on this duty of obedience to the civil power very strongly. Only last year, for instance, our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII., has, in an encyclical letter, taught it to us very clearly. "The church," he says, "rightly teaches that the power of the state comes from God." And he tells us that, whatever the form of government may be—that is, whether the rulers are chosen by the people or not—it is not simply from the people that their right to rule and to be obeyed comes; the people in an elective government do not make the power, although they designate the person or persons in whom the power of God is to rest.

Of course no one denies that the civil power may, in particular cases, forfeit its claim to our obedience by requiring of us things manifestly unjust or plainly contrary to the law of God or of the church; as, for instance, if it should require us to attend Protestant worship, or should forbid us to make our Easter duty. But such cases are very rare, at least here in this country. We shall know easily enough when they arise. There is little fear, as things now are, of too great respect for law among us; the danger, rather, is of our regarding laws as the mere decisions of a majority, to which we have to submit as far as we cannot help it, and because we cannot help it, but to which we owe no interior reverence, and by breaking which we commit no sin. Whereas the truth is that we do sin by breaking any law of the land which is not manifestly unjust or contrary to the rights of God and the obedience we owe to him.

Remember, then, my brethren, to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. The President, Congress, our governors and legislatures, and the other powers that be are really God's vicegerents, though not in so high an order as the spiritual; still in their own place they truly act in God's name. Find out and consider what they require; confess and amend any disregard or disrespect for their laws, unless you wish to be guilty of contempt and disobedience to him from whom all law comes.

SERMON CXLV.

THANKSGIVING DAY.

Giving thanks to God the Father.—Col. i. 12.

This week, as you know, my brethren, a day has been appointed by the civil authorities, according to long-established custom, which we are invited to devote specially to thanksgiving for the many blessings which we have received from God during the year. And though the observance of this day is not an ecclesiastical obligation, yet there is a singular appropriateness in it for us on account of its falling just at the close of the year which the church celebrates. At this time, when we have completed the round of the mysteries of our faith, and are about to recommence it in the season of Advent, it must naturally occur to us to look back and thank God, not only for all his temporal benefits, but also and especially for the spiritual blessings which he has given us, and which we have just finished commemorating.

Even in the temporal order, however, we have abundant cause to be grateful to God. True, we have had our trials and sufferings, some more, some less; though even these we can perhaps even now see, and shall see more clearly hereafter, to have been blessings in disguise. But we have had much happiness and comfort in spite of these trials. Surely we ought not to pass this by unnoticed.

But this is just what we are too likely to do. Somehow or other, we are all apt to take things when they go right as a matter of course, and only to notice them when they go wrong. When we are sick we complain and make a great fuss, and perhaps are not satisfied

unless we can make everybody else unhappy as well as ourselves; but when we are well, that is just as it should be: no thanks to anybody for that. No thanks to God, whose loving care and providence are necessary, and are given to us at each moment of our lives, and who is continually warding off from us a thousand dangers to which we are exposed, often through our own fault; no thanks to him whose angels watch over us to keep us in all our ways. By our ignorance and imprudence we are frequently endangering this wondrous life which he has given us; with all the science in the world, we do not understand it and could not direct it; it is he who causes our breath to come, our hearts to beat, and our blood to flow in our veins.

So also in the common affairs of life, our industry and skill would avail nothing if God did not come to our assistance. If our work or business prospers at all, it is due to him; it is his free gift. And all the conveniences of modern life which we pride ourselves so much on are the fruits of his power and skill which he lends us. It is he who shines on us, not only by the sun and moon, but also in those lights which we think that we ourselves produce; it is he who sends our telegraphic messages for us, who carries us where we will in our steamers and railway trains.

These perpetual and ordinary comforts of life, then, in which we all share, as well as our very life itself, are God's gift. And beside these, are there not more blessings which we can see if we look back on the year, standing out from the rest? Have we thanked him for all these? If not, let us then really make this a time to atone for past neglect; a time of thanksgiving in deed as well as in name.

But, above all, let us, whom he has given the signal and unspeakable blessing of the true faith, thank him for that. To those who have just come from the doubt and confusion of the world outside this true church this is a happiness which outweighs all troubles, a perpetual sunshine which drives away all clouds. Why should it not be so to us all? This is what St. Paul in his epistle wishes that it should be. "Giving thanks," he says, "to God the Father, who has made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have redemption through his Blood, the remission of sins." Let us think on these words, and see if there is not enough in them to make at least one Thanksgiving day.

SERMON CXLVI.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

We are so near the Feast of All Saints and the commemoration of all the faithful departed—All Souls' day—that we may well let our affectionate thoughts follow after our brethren who have gone before us and sleep in the peace of Christ.

There is scarcely one of us, dear brethren, who has not been familiar from childhood with the article of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in the communion of saints"; and there are few, if any, who have not derived consolation from this dogma of our faith, teaching, as it does, that we are not entirely cut off from those who have gone before us, but form with

them one great family, of which the head is Christ and the members the souls of the just, whether in heaven or in purgatory, or still in the flesh.

But if this truth of holy religion brings consolation, it brings also the duty of praying for our brethren who are passing through the cleansing fires of purgatory; who, because of sin or the debt due for sin, cannot enter their eternal home until they have repaid the last farthing. They can do nothing for themselves their day of meriting is past; they look to us who are their friends to help them.

While they were with us they were very dear to us —bound to us by ties of blood or friendship. Let us do our duty to them now; let us, by our good works in their behalf, show how much we love them; let us show that our affection for them was not selfish nor pretended, but so real and strong and lasting that death has but strengthened it and brought it to its fulness.

What one of us but has his daily task—his allotted work? Yet as each day brings its own burdens, so each day is full of opportunities of gaining indulgence for the souls in purgatory. The many inconveniences we all of us are called upon to suffer, the many sacrifices of comfort and of pleasure we make, the disappointments we meet with, the fatigues we bear—all these may be made sources of refreshment to our friends beyond the grave. If in the morning we would but offer to God all we shall do and suffer during the day for his honor and glory, and for the relief of the departed, oh! how soon would the angels welcome them to their true country, and how many advocates we should have before the throne of God!

But if so much can be done without any particular effort on our part, what shall we say of the efficacy of the special prayers we recite for them and the Masses we have offered for their repose! How shall we tell of their gratitude, of their unceasing supplications for us! We lose nothing, dear brethren, by praying for them; be assured we are rather the gainers, for not only do they pray for us, but more—our charity towards them deepens in our souls our love for God, and makes us thirst the more after virtue and holiness, and wins for us a higher place in heaven and a brighter crown of everlasting glory. Let us be generous, then; let us storm heaven with our prayers for the souls in purgatory, and we shall find rest for ourselves as well as for them.

Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. *Phil. iii.* 17; *iv.* 3. Be followers of me, brethren, and observe them who walk so as you have our model. For many walk, of whom I have told you often (and now tell you weeping) that they are enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame: who mind earthly things. But our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we wait for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowness, made like to the body of his glory, according to the operation whereby also he is able to subdue all things unto himself. Therefore, my dearly beloved brethren, and most desired, my joy and my crown: so stand fast in the Lord, my most dearly beloved. I beg of Euodia, and I beseech Syntyche to be of one mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee, my sincere companion, help those women who have labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement and the rest of my fellow-laborers, whose names are in the book of life.

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. ix.* 18–26. At that time: As Jesus was speaking these things unto them, behold a certain ruler came, and adored him, saying: Lord, my daughter is just now dead; but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus, rising up, followed him, with his disciples. And behold a woman who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. For she said within herself: If I shall but touch his garment I shall be healed. But Jesus, turning about and seeing her, said: Take

courage, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus came into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the crowd making a rout, he said: Give place, for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed at him. And when the crowd was turned out he went in, and took her by the hand. And the girl arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that country.

SERMON CXLVII.

MIXED MARRIAGES.

From the simplest lessons of experience, my dear brethren, I think it ought to be plain enough how miserable a thing a mixed marriage is likely to be. Even if the faith and practice of the Catholic party and of the children is what it should be—which is certainly hardly to be expected—there will be great and continual suffering to them on account of the separation of the Protestant father or mother—who is all the more loved the better and kinder he or she may be—from the unity of the church and from the ordinary means of salvation.

In fact, it can hardly be imagined how any one having a lively faith in the Catholic religion can marry a Protestant or infidel, unless under the influence of a hope that some time or other the conversion of the other party will be effected. This hope does occasionally prove not to be a vain one. There are cases, no doubt, in which a Protestant, who would not probably otherwise have turned his thoughts to the question at all, does become a Catholic by means

of marriage. But the best chance to obtain such a conversion is before the marriage is entered on: that is the time to try to secure it; and it is the duty of every Catholic who thinks of marrying one outside the church to do the best in his or her power to bring the other party over, not only in name but in fact, to the true faith. I say in fact, for, unfortunately, many a non Catholic, who has no strong conviction about religion in any way, will be willing to call himself a Catholic, and even to be baptized, in order to remove objections which may be made. Take care, then, that the conversion which is professed is a sincere and genuine one, and not merely got up for the occasion. I have heard of a case in which the Protestant party, when his religion was urged by the priest as an objection to the marriage, which would make trouble, most cheerfully replied: "Well, father, if it would be any convenience to you, I am quite ready to be a Catholic." Such converts are not so very uncommon, though it is not often that they let their state of mind be seen so plainly. They will sit through several instructions given to them by the priest, making no question or remark about anything which he says, that they may get through as soon as possible; and when they do get through, that is about the last of their Catholic profession, or at least of their attendance to any Catholic duties.

If, then, a conversion, and a real and true conversion, cannot be obtained before marriage, there is certainly much fear that it never will be accomplished afterward. Be warned, then, in time; do not indulge false hopes in this regard; do not marry in haste and repent at leisure.

And about this matter of conversion I will say a

[illegible] with reference not to Protestants, but to members and would-be Catholics. A Catholic who is negligent of his duties has, it is true, if he keeps his faith, a treasure which the Protestant has not; he knows what he has to be concerned with. God at the last will probably forgive it, and he may succeed. There is thus more hope for his final salvation in this way than for the Protestant; but that does not make a better companion during life; and many of the miseries of a mixed marriage are met with, and would, perhaps, even in a greater degree, with mutual Catholics than with Protestants. If, then, you contemplate marriage even with a Catholic, be sure to see that he or she attends to the duties required of Catholics, and has not contracted habits and dangerous habits. Do not delude yourself with the idea that a confession and Communion must be made at the time of the marriage, and that the priest will attend to all that is necessary. For this confession and Communion may be in some cases not at all good and fervent, they may be something like what some Protestants, as I have said, go through with for convenience or necessity. No, do not leave it all to the priest, but do your own part. If the behavior of the other party before marriage is not such as becomes a Christian, both with regard to the frequentation of the sacraments and also in the matter of temperance and in others of which you are the best and indeed the only judge, it is not likely that it will be so afterward. Take care, then, before taking a step which you cannot retrace. You, not the priest, are the one to secure now the amendment of life which is so necessary. A word to the wise should be sufficient.

SERMON CXLVIII.

IMITATION OF THE SAINTS.

My fellow-laborers, whose names are in the book of life.—PHIL. iv. 3.

THUS does St. Paul in the Epistle of to-day speak of St. Clement and the others who had "labored with him in the Gospel." Do you wish that your name, too, should be written in the book of life? Follow the path trodden here below by the saints of God, and then, even while yet on earth, your name will be recorded in heaven. For holy church commands us to observe this festival of All Saints, of which we are now keeping the octave, not only in honor of those whose names are in the calendar, and whose feasts come round in the course of each year, but also in praise of that great multitude which no man can number—of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues—who stand before the throne and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands. The saints whom the church has honored with canonization are but a small number in that vast multitude. They were the heroes of the Christian army, but the great majority of those who are now receiving the homage of the church were the rank and file—common every-day Christians, like ourselves. The festival of All Saints, therefore, especially appeals to us by showing us that sanctity is not something away off out of our reach and entirely beyond our powers, but that it is what we must each strive after if we hope to win heaven. For nothing defiled can enter there, and without holiness no man shall see God. As,

then, we hope to be one day saints in heaven, we must try now to be saints on earth. That is why St. Paul addresses all the faithful as the "beloved of God, called to be saints." Yet many Christians are forgetful of this high vocation. They seem to think that God has laid down one rule, one course of life for saints, and quite another for ordinary people. This is all a mistake. God's law is the same for every one. There are, indeed, special duties belonging to particular states of life, but apart from these there is no difference in what is required of every Christian. We are all of us bound to follow the strait and narrow way which leadeth unto life. The chief happiness of that life will consist in the sight of God, to be always in his presence, serving him continually in joy and thanksgiving. And the way to this life our Lord has told us in the sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God."

So, then, in order to attain to this life, to dwell for ever in the sight of God, it is not necessary to imitate the saints in their extraordinary deeds, their heroic acts of penance and self-sacrifice, their suffering for the faith. Some of us are, indeed, called upon to stand out conspicuously among other Christians, as they did, and show to the world an example of courage and heroism. But for all of us the hidden virtues are the ones required, and if we cultivate these, God, who seeth in secret, will himself reward us openly in the day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed. The one thing needful for each one of us is purity of heart, to cleanse our hearts from sin and from all affection towards sin. "Dearly beloved," says St. John, "if our heart do not repre-

hend us, we have confidence towards God." See to it, then, that your heart is all right towards God. Cleanse your soul from mortal sin by turning your heart away from the sin you have committed by sincere and hearty contrition and by a good confession. Then *keep* your heart right towards God by giving it to him who says to you, "My son, give me thy heart." God alone is worthy of the full love of our hearts, and he alone can satisfy the heart of man. If we set our affections upon sin or upon the passing things of this world there is reserved for us in the end nothing but unsatisfied longings and bitterness of heart. But if we purify our hearts from every affection that would lead us away from God we shall indeed be called "blessed," and our names shall be written in the book of life.

SERMON CXLIX.

HEAVEN.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.—St. Matt. v. 2.

All Saints' day is a solemn and glorious festival for all heaven as well as for all the world; for to-day God is praised, and the great salvation by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ magnified and lauded by a common, universal act of holy congratulation and worship among all the saints—that is, among all souls that are united to God in the communion of saints, whether in the church triumphant, in the church suffering, or in the church militant.

It seems to me that none but Catholics believe in

heaven, the eternal home of the saints after death, because they alone appear to understand what a saint is, as the church has proved herself to be the only power which has been able to train and canonize one.

Yes, all we can know of heaven is, that it is the reward, the everlasting life, the new and divine state of being which the saints enter into and enjoy when they have left this world—that is, when they die in the church militant and rise in glory in the church triumphant. If any Christian, then, or so-called Christian, fancies he can meditate about heaven, and hopes to get there without knowing what a saint is, and without striving to be as near one as he can, he is simply deceiving himself. I fear that the kind of place some people think would be a good enough heaven for them, if we are to judge by the way they live, is, in fact, not much above what the state of hell really is. Many are the souls who ought to have been saints, and are damned because they were unfaithful to the vocation God gave them, and too sensual to make the necessary sacrifices that such a vocation demanded. What kind of a heaven, for instance, do you think the many intelligent Protestants we meet with every day will likely get, who know they ought to become Catholics to save their souls, and are yet afraid to take the step; who stand still and count the cost, and cheat their consciences with the false doctrine that no real sacrifices are demanded of them, because God will be more glorified if they leave all to him and do nothing themselves? And yet these people, and a good many Catholics, too, are living just such lives, and in their deaths they will not be divided.

And now do you say: O Father! tell us, then, what a saint is, that we may be sure we are not all wrong, but may have some hope of imitating such, and so join the company of the glorified ones in heaven when we die! I answer: A saint is one who does everything he feels that God wants him to do, and carefully gives up and avoids everything that he feels is not pleasing to God. Apply that to yourself. God does not want the same thing of everybody, nor require all to make the same sacrifices. So that, as a fact, there are all kinds of saints, as we know. But in what he does require he demands that one should aim at doing it *perfectly*. "Be ye perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect," said our Lord. Be perfectly honest, be perfectly pure, be perfectly sober, be perfectly charitable, be perfectly obedient to the laws of God and man, be perfectly humble, be perfectly free from loving money or other riches.

Don't let me ever hear you say again that you are "a man of the world and must live in it" as an excuse for the wretched apology for a Christian life you lead. You know that is a lie. You are a man, and *a Christian man of the kingdom of God and of his saints*, and *that* is the kind of a place you live in, and must square your life accordingly, or you will never see the kingdom of God and of his saints in glory, which is heaven, when you die. In to-day's Gospel our Lord pronounces the eight beatitudes. Think on them, and, if you do not know them by heart, take out your Bible when you go home and read them at the beginning of the fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. So live that you will merit to be one of those our Lord declares to be "blessed," and you will surely be a saint.

Easter being a movable Feast which can occur on any day from the 22d of March to the 25th of April, the number of Sundays between Epiphany and Septuagesima, and between Pentecost and Advent, varies according to the situation of Easter. There are always at least two Sundays, unless Epiphany falls on a Sunday, and never more than six, between Epiphany and Septuagesima. Likewise, there are never fewer than twenty-three Sundays after Pentecost, or more than twenty-eight. The Gospel and Epistle for the last Sunday after Pentecost are always the same. When there are twenty-three Sundays, the Gospel and Epistle for the last Sunday are substituted for those of the twenty-third. When there are twenty-five Sundays, the Gospel and Epistle for the sixth Sunday after Epiphany are taken; when there are twenty-six, those also of the fifth after Epiphany; when there are twenty-seven, those of the fourth, and when there are twenty-eight, those of the third, in order to fill up the interval which occurs. In any year, in which there are more than twenty-four Sundays after Pentecost, proper sermons for these Sundays are to be found among those which are arranged for the Sundays following the Feast of the Epiphany. If one sermon is wanting, it is taken from the sixth Sunday after Epiphany; if two, three, or four are needed, the last two or three or four sermons which precede Septuagesima are to be taken, in their order.

Twenty-fourth or Last Sunday after Pentecost.

EPISTLE. *Col. i.* 9–14. Brethren: We cease not to pray for you, and to beg that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding: that you may walk worthy of God, in all things pleasing: being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God: strengthened with all might according to the power of his glory, in all patience and long-suffering with joy, giving thanks to God the Father, who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love: in whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins.

GOSPEL. *St. Matt. xxiv* 15–35. At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: When you shall see "the abomination of desolation," which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place: he that readeth, let him understand. Then let those that are in Judea flee to the mountains. And he that is on the house-top, let him not come down to take anything out of his house: and he that is in the field, let him not go back to take his coat. And woe to them that are with child, and that give suck in those days. But pray that your flight be not in the winter or on the Sabbath. For there shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be. And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved: but for the sake of the elect those days shall be shortened. Then, if any man

shall say to you: Lo, here is Christ, or there, do not believe him. For there shall arise false christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect. Behold I have told it to you beforehand. If therefore they shall say to you: Behold he is in the desert; go ye not out: Behold he is in the closets; believe it not. For as lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together. And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be moved. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn: and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and majesty. And he shall send his angels with a trumpet, and a great voice: and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the uttermost bounds of them Now learn a parable from the fig-tree: when its branch is now tender, and the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh. So also you, when you shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Amen, I say to you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

SERMON CL.

MARRYING OUT OF THE CHURCH.

In our course of instructions on marriage, my dear friends, we have so far spoken chiefly of the

care which should be taken in the selection of the person who is to be one's constant companion through life, and shown that not only earthly happiness, but even the salvation of the soul, may depend on this choice being made wisely. We will now go on to consider the ceremony of marriage itself.

Some people, though they have always been Catholics and lived among Catholics, seem to be entirely ignorant of the laws and requirements of the church on this subject. They appear to think that nothing has to be done but to call on the priest some fine evening, and that he will marry them then and there. And if it is not convenient to go to the priest, or if he makes any difficulty about it, why, then a Protestant minister or his honor the mayor will do at a pinch.

Now there are several points which these people need instruction about, and several mistakes which they make in this very important affair. We shall have to consider them separately. And we will begin with the greatest mistake of all which can be fallen into by Catholics who wish to get married, and that is to go to a Protestant minister for the purpose.

What is, then, the harm exactly of going to a Protestant minister to get married? Is it that a Protestant minister is an immoral or vicious character, with whom we should have nothing to do? By no means. He is, indeed, more likely to be to blame for his errors in religion than his people, for he has, from his greater knowledge in religious matters, a better chance to know the truth; but even a minister may be in good faith about his doctrine. And in other respects he may be a worthy and estimable gentleman.

But the reason why Catholics should avoid going to him for marriage is that marriage is one of the seven sacraments which our Lord has entrusted to the keeping of his church. These sacraments, then, belong to the church, and we cannot recognize the right of those who separate from her to administer them or to assist officially at them, though they may have the power to do so validly. Therefore, though marriage be real and valid when contracted before a Protestant minister, and though his own people, of course, are not to blame, if in good faith, for availing themselves of his services, we cannot do so. Indeed, this would be the case even if marriage were not a sacrament, but merely a religious rite or ceremony; we cannot allow the ministers of any sect separated from the church to act as such for us in any religious function ; to do so would be to allow their claim to act in the name of Christ. This we can never do, and, above all, where the sacraments are concerned.

Another, and a very weighty reason, why Catholics cannot go before a minister for marriage, is that no one but the Catholic clergy can be supposed to be sufficiently acquainted with the laws of God and of the church regarding Christian marriage. There are impediments, as they are called, which make marriage invalid unless a dispensation is obtained from the proper source. Some of these are commonly known, such as those which proceed from a near relationship of the parties; but there are others which are not known even by name to the great mass of the faithful, and which a Protestant minister, even should he happen to know them, would never for a moment regard. Catholics, therefore, if they go to a minister to get married, run

a great risk of not being really married at all, owing to these impediments not being detected or attended to. By the law of the State their marriage may be a good and real one, but in the sight of God it will not be so, if any such impediment should exist, and not have been removed by dispensation; and this holds, even though no suspicion of such an impediment should have arisen. You see, then, how important it is in this matter to consult those who are competent to advise them.

SERMON CLI.

JOY IN GOD'S SERVICE.

Let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, . . . and be ye thankful.—COLOSS. iii. 15.

OF the several great lessons contained in to-day's Epistle, the one most insisted on and brought out is that of thankfulness and joyfulness in the service of God.

In the labors of St. Paul (and his labors were more abundant than all the Apostles), in his frequent tribulations and crosses, he never ceased giving thanks in all things—nor did he ever tire of inculcating this same duty on the first Christians. If, then, my brethren, thankfulness and joyfulness are such a great part of religion, it would be well this morning to see if they be characteristic of our service. We have a multitude of reasons for being thankful to God, if we but thought of them—the gifts of nature—life, health, strength, the pleasures

and gratifications of the mind, learning, objects of interest, of study and beauty, both in nature and art, the pleasures of home, the joys of friendship. These are real and great benefits; they are causes of joy and motives of thankfulness. Our good God intended us to find enjoyment in the moderate use of them, not, indeed, as ends in themselves, but as means to our one great end. And so he has spread the charm of beauty over this place of our sojourn and made it pleasant and interesting, lest we lose heart and become sad, and languish on our journey to heaven.

But to speak of higher gifts and benefits: What motives of joy and thankfulness ought we not to find in the knowledge of God, his truth, mercy, and goodness as made known to us in the Scripture and in his Divine Son, our Saviour and friend, the God-Man; in the gift of the faith, the spiritual riches of the church and the sacraments, his mercies to us personally—blessings on our labors, the removal of dangers from our paths, his gracious forgiveness of our sins, time and again. Then, too, what we expect and through his mercy count on for the future—the joys of heaven, those delights which pass our understanding. The life of heaven will be pure joy, and its one occupation thankfulness. Surely, then, this life should be a figure and foretaste of it; and so St. Paul thought, for he bids us "be thankful," "rejoice and rejoice always"; singing in grace in our hearts, and in every word and work giving thanks to God.

It is plain that, since God has done his part in bestowing the benefits in such abundant measure, we should do ours in returning thanks, for gratitude is

the correlative of benefit. It is equally plain that the true religion is joyful. Now, is such our religion? Is this the way we act? Is it the way we consider God's service? We see, I think, more anxious and sad faces than thankful and glad ones; and I fear that the joyfulness of the latter does not come generally from the reasons I have given. It comes too often from worldly causes, from success in temporal things, from hopes and prospects which relate to indifferent things, if they are not dangerous and positively bad. Whereas the common idea of religion is that it is an unpleasant, sad, up-hill sort of a thing, which imposes restraints upon us, and, far from being a cause of thankfulness and joy, is a great interference with the pleasure of life. Pious people, too, are regarded as dull, simple, spiritless creatures, quite the opposite of joyful.

This is all wrong, all false, and, if it be our religion, then we *have not* the true religion, at least practically. For as God's benefits are real and great, so our thanks and joy should be in them and correspond to them. Religion, being our highest duty, should be and can be our highest pleasure. God says it is, and he is truth; those who have tried say the same. "What shall I render to God for all he hath rendered to me?"—"better one day in thy courts than a thousand years in the tents of sinners"—"taste and see how sweet the Lord is." Our consciences and experience bear out the same truth; for surely evil cannot be compared to good in fulness, in intensity; and, above all, it will not wear, it will not last, and it leaves us dissatisfied, fearful, sad. The pleasure and joy of a good life to a good man even here are far greater than the pleasure of sin to a sin-

ner. Let us, then, make up our minds, once for all, that not only is religion the most necessary, but the wisest and the happiest thing for us. Let us serve God with thankfulness, both for what he has done and will do for us, if we are faithful. If he has done so much in this state of probation, exile, and punishment, what will he not do when the time of reward and enjoyment arrives. Surely, considering what we are and what we have done, the pains and crosses bear no proportion to the benefits, and we have cause even in present labors to be thankful and in every word and work to give him praise through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERMON CLII.

FORGIVE AND BE FORGIVEN.

"*Bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another. Even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so you also.*"—COL. iii. 13.

THIS, my dear brethren, is the law of Christ. It is a law we are bound to keep. We cannot save our souls unless we do keep it. There is no possible way to escape its requirements, for our Lord himself declares positively: "But if you will *not* forgive men, *neither* will your Father forgive *you your offences*" (Matt. vi. 15). Therefore, there is no way to save our souls, no way to be true Christians in life, unless we forgive all and every one, without exception, every injury they have done us.

But one may say: I do forgive all who have in-

jured me if they repent, say they are sorry, and ask pardon! My dear brethren, this won't do. You must forgive whether they repent or not. Nothing less will satisfy the Lord. The best reason is that since the Lord has forgiven us, so we also are bound to forgive all. A true lover of the Lord doesn't want a better reason. A greater or a better *cannot* be given. Our Lord himself has set the example. He has taken our sins upon himself, and caused the Eternal Father to forgive us our sins for his sake beforehand, before we have even repented or shown by a single sign that we want to belong to God and to hate sin. Do we not receive in our baptism, as infants, the grace that destroys original sin? Original sin placed us under the power of the devil, and made us unworthy to be called the sons of God, but our Christian baptism made us again the sons of God. Does not God forgive us also our mortal sins, giving us time to repent, and even waiting patiently for our repentance? Remember, these sins after baptism are all the greater because after being made innocent we again become guilty.

But some try to excuse themselves and say: It is hard to have to do this; I can't do it. The sin against me is too great; it ought not to be forgiven. This is not true. There is nothing we can't forgive, nothing we are permitted to leave unforgiven. We can forgive any sin against us if we will. If it is hard, pray and it will become easy. Sincere prayer for him who is our enemy is sure to remove very soon all feeling against him. This is certain: that it will, *without fail*, prevent the malice and revenge in our hearts from overcoming us and causing us to sin grievously against charity. Remember that every-

thing we do well for our Lord is hard at first, but is made easy by prayer and faithful, persevering effort.

Again, some object: I try to pray but cannot, because when I pray I think of my wrongs and begin to hate my enemy, so that my prayer is insincere or stops on my lips! Then pray for all poor sinners, and don't mean to leave your enemy out of your prayers. This is a good beginning, and keeps you from mortal sin, for pray we must *for our enemies.* This is a fundamental law of the Christian life. If we intentionally leave out one single soul when we pray for all poor sinners, we sin in the very presence of God, and our prayers are rejected; nor shall they be accepted until we include that soul also.

Let us remember, my dear brethren, that we are called by our Lord to show to the world that being the friends of God means that he puts into our souls his loving, merciful, long-suffering Spirit, and thus makes us like to himself. Does any one want to be God-like? Then let him forgive from his heart every injury and all who injure him.

To gain courage to forgive, let us see what forgiveness does. It saves God's honor. It prevents his being insulted. For example: when one insults us, he sins against God and insults him also. If we answer back, we also insult God, and make two sins instead of one. Next, our angry answer makes our enemy reply again; for another sin are we responsible. So it goes on until a number of sins are committed by each one. Silence on our part would have prevented these insults to God and left our souls unstained. We were not silent. The consequence is we not only increased another's sin, but we added our own and

lost the friendship of God. Had a forgiving spirit been in each soul this could not have happened. Had it been in one of them, one soul at least would have been kept from sin. Cultivate, then, a forgiving spirit, and "even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so you also" forgive all.

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